



The History and Circumstances of
The Nation of Shosara

An Earthdawn Campaign setting

Derived from works by: Andrew Ragland

Presented by Tableau Infractus Archive

THE HISTORY AND CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE NATION OF SHOSARA

A Web Book derived from the works of

Andrew Ragland

CONTENTS

Introduction	3
On the History of Shosara:.....	6
The Early Days	6
The Separation	6
Political Divisions	8
Rise of the Invae	8
Treaties with Thera	9
Orichalcum Wars	10
The Scourge	11
On the Loss of Sereatha	12
Post Scourge Exploration	13
Rebuilding	13
Further Trouble with Invae	14
Theran Relations	15
Line of Succession	15
Current Situation	15
On the Geography of Shosara	16
Shosirriyey	16
Sensirrac	20
Dulurny	20
Orinicea	21

The Art of Shosaran Politics.....	22
Orders	23
Relations with Throal	30
Embassy to Blood Wood	31
Private Involvement	31
Groups, Sects, Cults	31
The Shosaran Way	33
The Races of Shosara	33
Orks	35
Daily Life	37
Shosarans and the Paths	38
Festivals and Remembrance Days	39
Rites of Passage	40
Relationships with the Passions	43
Disciplines	43
The Arts and Creativity	44
Notable Personalities	44
Roleplaying a Shosaran	49
A Shosaran Discipline	49
Insect Hunter	49

The History and Circumstances of The Nation of Shosara

A Tableau Infractus Fanzine Re-publication,

Original transcript can be located here

<http://www.reocities.com/Athens/Ithaca/1440/shosara.htm>

Contact Information:

Andrew Ragland (private)

Andrew Tobin Dru1138@ yahoo.com

Websites:

Tableau Infractus PDF archive

<http://www.4shared.com/dir/28316119/e26be9b/sharing.html>

Archival Note

This is a Tableau Infractus PDF library archive. It is produced to highlight works of others and formatted to be an archive should the original source be lost from the internet. *The History and Circumstances of the Nation of Shosara* is the second archive for the author Andrew Ragland.

Shosara is a kingdom to the far north that used to be Elven, but is now a bit more. The original manuscript was written over a year before *The Blood Wood* was released. Many aspects of the work are still usable regardless of the content of the current edition of the game world.

CREDITS

Derived from the
Writings of
Andrew Ragland

Layout Design & Editing
Andrew Tobin

Cover Design
Andrew Tobin

***Disclaimer:** Earthdawn is a Registered Trademark of FASA Corporation. Original Earthdawn material © 1994-2011 by FASA Corporation & Redbrick Limited. All Rights Reserved. Used without permission. Any use of copyrighted material or trademarks in this file should not be viewed as a challenge to those copyrights or trademarks.*

This is a work by fans for fans.

Presented by Tableau Infractus Fanzine.

The History and Circumstances of The Nation of Shosara

An Earthdawn Campaign Location

INTRODUCTION

The Elven Nation of The Bloodwood is only one version of elves available in Earthdawn. Characters not of the former Wyrnwood or the current Bloodwood have another option, the nation of Shosara. This location is mentioned in several Earthdawn books though it never shows up on any canon released map and very little has been written about it. Andrew Ragaland wrote this manuscript before the release of the Bloodwood and that release conflicts with some sections of this manuscript. Still it provides a different outlook on elves and their second major nation.

As with the Galedon archive the original Geocities home page for this file has been lost. The Reocities group is attempting to save the old Geocities content and has resurrected some of the content. For the time being this manuscript is available there.

Minimal Earthdawn 1st Edition rules are included at the rear of the book. Most of this manuscript can be used easily in any edition of Earthdawn.



A Letter, to Merrox, Master, Hall of Records, Throal:

Greetings!

Along with this letter, the messenger has brought you a large wooden box. Within it, you will find several gifts to celebrate the opening of diplomatic relations between Throal and Shosara. Please convey the tapestry to his majesty, Varulus II, King of Throal, and the small carved wooden box to Karon Foll, Wizard, City of Yistane, in gratitude for his assistance in the initial negotiations.

The bulk of the contents, however, are destined for your collections, thus the conveyance of the parcel to you. Within, you will find a copy of the History and Circumstances of the Nation of Shosara, prepared especially for the Hall of Records. The work has been translated into Throalic for the convenience of your scholars, including all maps and annotations. During the visit of our delegation, we became aware of the terrible gap left in your records since the Separation. Hopefully, this gift will go far toward repairing this lack.

I look forward to receiving the copies of recent discoveries that you discussed with the ambassador. They will assist us greatly in mending our own breach of knowledge concerning the lands to our south, your own Barsaive. I especially anticipate the log of the first voyage of the Earthdawn, in expectation of spending many days comparing their efforts with those of our own early explorers after the opening of our kaers.

If you should chance to visit our fair nation, know that you would be welcome in my household as family. Our respective duties as archivists and overseers of archives, alas, do not normally permit such journeys, but with the opening of relations between your nation and mine, perhaps one or the other of us can manage to be assigned to a delegation. In that way, we could make the trip and claim that it was work. After all, someone must do the field research, and who better than the master chronicler to compare methods of organization of records?

Yours in scholarship,

Oseandea Ikotifar Wefayolin, Bearer of the Fallen Rose, Chronicler, Collegium of Shosara



The History and Circumstances of The Nation of Shosara

PREPARED BY THE OFFICE OF THE CHRONICLER, COLLEGIUM OF SHOSARA
PRESENTED TO THE HALL OF RECORDS AT THROAL, 1606 PF, THROALIC YEAR 1506

*"When governance is shared, its power is lessened.
When knowledge is shared, its power is doubled."
--- Shosara Proverb.*

The nation of Shosara traces its roots back hundreds of years. It has endured the rise of other nations, the fall of the elven Court, the depredations of the Scourge, war, pestilence and attack. Through all of the tribulations that life has had to offer, Shosara has not only survived, but has maintained its identity as a predominantly elven nation. This is not to say that its ways have remained fixed and unchanging for all of its history. Far from it. Shosara has grown and changed to meet the challenges of the world. The oak tree is toppled by the storm, its unyielding strength working against it, but the willow tree, which bends before the wind, survives and rises once more when the tempest is past.

This ability to grow, to adapt, has led to both the greatest triumphs and most shocking tragedies of the nation's existence. This work explores the events that have shaped the current nation. It traces Shosara from its early days as a northern outpost to the current day, a flourishing land with a rich tradition. The ways of life in modern Shosara are examined in detail, each custom and belief put under analysis to determine not only how the Shosaran way of life is structured, but why. Recent developments are considered at the end of the work, including the opening of relations with the dwarven kingdom of Throal, and the severing of alliances with the Theran Empire.

ON THE HISTORY OF SHOSARA

"If you do not know where you have been, how do you know where you are going?"

The events that shaped modern-day Shosara are complex. Some are still being argued over by scholars, as far as their causes and their impact upon the course of history. Chronicles of the times, however, were meticulously kept, so while the why is up for debate, the what and when are not. This volume explores the development of Shosara from before the Separation to the present day. Events before the Separation are treated somewhat sketchily, as most Shosarans consider the nation to have truly begun at the Separation, known more commonly as the Founding.

The Early Days

Shosara began its existence as a northern colony planted by elves from Wyrn Wood who had grown restless. Inspired by Floranuus, they set off to the north, not knowing what awaited them, only knowing that they must travel. Thirty days' ride from the Wood, they came upon the perfect site for their settlement, a broad, flat plain set between high mountain ranges, with a slow, deep river flowing through the middle. Here was fertile land, a good water supply and protection from extremes of weather. A colony was planted, and Named Shosara, from the elven meaning Great Promise.

For many years, the colony grew and thrived. The harsh winters of the northern lands, shorter growing season and inhospitable creatures of the Land of Great Promise produced a hardier, more resourceful population. New situations required new ways of responding, which over time led to new ways of life. Under the pressures of their environment, the Shosarans developed a wider range of creativity. Their very inventiveness, however, proved to be nearly their undoing.

The Separation

During the reign of Queen Dallia, the diverging customs of the Shosarans became an issue at the elven Court. Wyrn Wood had long been the center of elven culture.

Traditions and rituals created at the elven Court were disseminated throughout the world, setting the standards of the elven way. To diverge from the dictates of the court, in the view of the throne, was to diverge from being elven. Shosara's status as an elven nation was called into question.

Impassioned pleas were made by Shosaran delegations to the Rose Throne. Children grow up, went the argument, they move into their own homes, and take up their own lives. Becoming adults does not stop them from being their parents' children. It does not end their respect for the people that taught them the basic precepts of living. Shosara still held great respect for the Court. Different conditions of living, however, required different ways of living. Please, the delegates said, regard us as children who have grown up and moved away, as part of the natural process of life. We are not rebelling against you. We are simply maturing.

After much consideration, Queen Dallia agreed that she did not know enough about the living conditions of the Shosarans that had engendered their new traditions. She made plans to journey to Shosara, to view the situation first-hand, so that she could make her decision regarding the fate of the Shosarans fully informed. No holder of the Rose Throne had ever seen the northlands, and Queen Dallia had never left the Wood

before. This was a momentous decision. Like all such events, there were doomsayers and predictions of disaster, and as always, they were ignored. Tragically, this time they were correct.

As the Queen's caravan left Wyrms Wood, they were set upon by the great dragon Alamaise. No record of the accusations was made, but survivors say that Alamaise raged at the Queen, claiming that numerous crimes had been committed by the elves against dragonkind. Queen Dallia attempted to negotiate, pleading with the dragon for mercy and a rational solution, but Alamaise was having none of it. In his fury, he attacked the caravan, slaying the Queen and most of her retinue. The few survivors fled back into the Wood, bearing the sad news that the Queen was dead.

The issue of Shosaran variance lay fallow for a time. For two years, no successor to the Rose Throne could be found. Despair settled into the hearts of elvenkind, a mere shadow of what was to come. At last, Queen Failla of the Western Kingdoms journeyed to Wyrms Wood, acceding to the throne of the elven Court and setting the stage for the greatest turning point in Shosara's history.

For many years, Failla had devoutly followed the dictates of the Court, treating the slightest whim of the reigning Queen as having the weight of law. The idea of any deviation from the dictates of the Court shocked her deeply. As far as she was concerned, Shosara must be brought to heel, its divergent ways abandoned without a second thought. The pleas made to Dallia fell upon deaf ears when presented to Failla. She would not journey to Shosara, perhaps fearing for her own life, but certainly having no care for the welfare of her subjects. Separation was threatened unless the Shosarans fell into line.

In an attempt to improve relations and perhaps persuade the Queen to show some reason in her decision, Shosaran craftsmen designed a gift surpassing any work ever

seen. Taking a rose from the personal garden of the Queen, they enchanted it with powerful magics, preserving it from death. To protect the bloom from physical harm, it was enclosed in a case of impervious crystal, bound about with powerful sorceries. The Everliving Flower was then sent from Shosara to the Court at Wyrms Wood.

It never arrived. Somewhere between Shosara and Wyrms Wood, the messenger was waylaid and the Flower disappeared. Its fate was not discovered until after the Scourge.

Failla was outraged. Not only had the Shosarans strayed from her vision of the elven Way, they had failed to deliver on a promise made directly to her. In a fit of rage, Failla issued a Declaration of Separation against the nation of Shosara, cutting off the elves of the north from the Court and its guidance. When her chief counselor and most trusted advisor, Elianor Messias, spoke against this act, Failla exiled him as well. Of course, everyone knows the outcome of his exile, but the other consequences of Failla's actions have not been widely known outside the northlands.

The shock from this act rippled throughout elvendom. Never before had any elf been cast out from the Court for any charge save outright treason, and never had an entire nation been exiled. Shosara was thrown into disarray. Debate grew into arguments, which turned into near-riot before clear heads finally prevailed.

Calling themselves the Order of the Fallen Rose, a small cadre of scholars and adepts in the capitol city of Shosirriyey put forth the idea that, by acting in such an un-elven way as to send an entire nation into exile, Failla had shown herself to be unworthy of the throne. If this was what the Court had come to, Shosara was well quit of it. The Rose Throne was declared to be vacant, and the Court fallen until such time as a Queen could be found who would revoke the Declaration and take the Court in a properly elven

direction once more. While many dismissed this stance as bitterness, it took root, finding fertile ground in those dissatisfied with the previous behavior of the Queen. Later events, including the development of the Ritual of the Thorns, convinced more Shosarans that the Order of the Fallen Rose was correct.

Shosara survived without the Court, without contact with southern elvendom, under its own guidance. If this is wrong, let succeeding generations judge, but let them also know that they would not be present without the actions of their ancestors.

Political Divisions

Shosarans quickly drew themselves up into two rival camps. The Order of the Fallen Rose acted as moderates, keeping the two primary factions from going to war with one another, reminding them that elves do not fight among themselves.

The Reunificationists; Dusibi ti'Sperensa, originally comprised the larger part of the population. They felt that by bringing Shosara back into line with the dictates of the Court, they could convince Failla to lift the Declaration. After the Dusibi overtures to the elven Court were rebuffed, however, and their delegations were turned away at the border, they lost faith, and subsequently lost followers.

The Telegorotish'hansa, or Separationists, took the more radical view. Instead of trying to reconcile with the Court, they declared that the Court had fallen subsequent to Failla's actions. Shosara would have to continue the elven way of life on its own. No reconciliation could be possible with a fallen Court. Failla's rejection of the Dusibi swelled the ranks of the Hansa.

Both movements fragmented over the centuries, different approaches to the two major philosophies being pursued. The underlying schools of thought, however, remained the same, and provided unifying

forces that held together the Shosarans at the same time that they became divided over approach.

Alas, when news of the Separation reached the capitol, her majesty Queen Losira took her own life out of shame. Her daughters followed her into the Citadel of the Shining Ones, leaving Shosara without a direct lineal heir. The Bearers of the Fallen Rose, leaders of the Order, swiftly found a candidate. Insha'tallia Lovrilliyey of the city of Sensirrac, a niece of the former Queen, was brought to the capitol. She acceded to the throne as Losira II, taking her aunt's Name to clear it of any stain on its honor. Thus began the Shosaran tradition of the crown ruling in the name of honored predecessors, and thus began the custom of the heir being chosen by the Bearers of the Fallen Rose.

Rise of the Invae

Within two hundred years of the Founding, Shosara had new problems. The rise of the mana level that presaged the arrival of the Horrors made it possible for other astral beings to grow more powerful and more populous. Quite by accident, Betildne Tno, a Questor of Vestrial, unveiled a secret society operating in the western farmlands and mining country. Organized in a strict hierarchical structure divided into castes of warriors, workers and administrators, and owing fealty to a Queen, at first the cult was thought to be an attempt to break away from Shosara and found a new nation. When the goal of conquest became rapidly apparent, and battle was joined between the cult and Shosaran forces, the cult was then thought to be a treasonous conspiracy to overthrow the rightful Queen and replace her line with another.

The truth was far more terrible. Examination of some of the slain revealed features of insects, including hard shells, pincers instead of hands, antennae growing from foreheads. When at last an administrative headquarters was taken, the

true nature of the invasion became known. Astral beings had taken possession of the bodies of the cult members, and begun changing them in terrible ways. The administrators were far more insectile, some having achieved a near-complete transformation into a gigantic ant-like form.

Magicians were quickly brought to the fore, as the strange invaders seemed vulnerable to particular sorceries. Questors of Garlen also seemed to have some power over the beings. Betildne Tno led a cadre of Questors of Vestrial in random raids, the warriors and workers being vulnerable to unexpected situations and trickery. Apparently the transformation robbed the victims of their creativity and ability to make their own decisions.

After months of heavy warfare, the central hive in the Ticmi Mountains was taken, and the Queen, a monstrous being nearly the size of a dragon, slain. In her dying breath, though, she swore that the Shosarans had not seen the last of the insects. Her words were proven true within the year.

For the remaining decades before the Scourge, a continuous battle was fought against these astral invaders. No sooner was one hive put down, than another was discovered on the other side of the nation. A specialized Discipline evolved, combining the Beastmaster with the Scout and adding unique Talents to create the Insect Hunter. To this day, an elite cadre of Insect Hunters patrols the nation, seeking out and slaying the insect invaders wherever they can be found. More can be read about the Insect Hunters in the chapter on the Order of the Jade Mask.

Treaties with Thera

In the year 446 PF, Meach Vara Lingam, Elder of Thera, announced the completion of Kearos Navarim's final work, Rites of Protection and Passage. This work, it was said, contained the secrets for surviving the coming Scourge. None would survive the

coming dangers without it.

Great debates arose over how best to protect Shosara from the Scourge. That it was coming, there could be no dispute. Experiments proved beyond a shadow of a doubt that the mana level was rising, and as it rose more and more terrible creatures appeared. The invae had been trouble enough. There would be no surviving the coming of the Horrors. Certainly, action must be taken. But what?

Elves should look to the Wood for guidance, said the Dusibi, regardless of the Court's attitude toward Shosara. There is no Court, said the Hansa. We have been left to make our own way in the world. We must find guidance from the Passions and from our own collected wisdom. The council halls rang with ugly voices and uglier words as fear drove elves to extremes. Many grew concerned that violence would break out as the tensions rose.

Gladly, calmer heads prevailed. Emissaries were dispatched to Thera to secure the secrets of the Rites of Protection and Passage. Doubts arose about the arrangement when the Therans demanded a price for their knowledge. After much negotiation, however, it was agreed that a fair price should be paid. After all, the School of Shadows had spent decades working with highly dangerous magics, and had themselves paid for the Rites of Protection and Passage in blood many times over. Favorable trade agreements were signed between Thera and Shosara, principally concerning the supply of orichalcum but also covering other commodities. In return, the Therans sent representatives to Shosara to train elven adepts in the preparation of magical shelters, known as kaers.

There are those who hold the opinion that Shosara's decision to seek Thera aid was partially responsible for Alachia's decision to not do likewise. Alachia could not bring herself to act in accordance with Shosara, regardless of the danger to her people. Her

pride and stubborn refusal to act in a sensible fashion doomed the elves of Wyrn Wood to corruption and pain. Many Shosarans labor under a heavy burden of guilt, feeling themselves responsible for the transformation of the Blood Elves.

Shortly after the agreements were concluded between Shosara and Thera, the First Elder of Thera declared the Theran Empire, and began negotiations with other nations under less favorable conditions. Shosara must count itself fortunate that its own deal was concluded before the Therans adopted their later attitude. Association with the Theran Empire eventually became unprofitable, and finally intolerable, but in the early days, great benefit accrued to both nations.

Orichalcum Wars

After Nehr'esham became Thera, and the Rites of Protection and Passage were announced (446 PF), demand for the magical element orichalcum rose sharply. The element was used extensively in the magical workings of the School of Shadows, as well as in the construction of the early kaers. Thera bought more and more, driving up the price and creating an artificially inflated market.

These were good times for Shosara. During the battles in the Ticmi Mountains, extensive deposits of orichalcum were found. Mining efforts built up the stock while caravans hauled consignments southward. Unfortunately, having a large supply of something valuable on hand draws thieves as honey draws flies. In the Shosaran year 506 PF, a fleet of poorly-built drakkars arrived from the Twilight Peaks, bringing a horde of crystal raiders, trolls who had developed their own Disciplines for looting and pillaging. They swept in low over the southern mountains, evading Shosaran watchposts for the most part, and were upon the orichalcum stockpiles before sufficient forces could be rallied for a proper defense. The elven forces were slaughtered, and the

orichalcum carried off by the trolls.

This act of greed and barbarism touched off what later became known as the Orichalcum Wars. The high price and strained market coupled with a triggering act of violence lit a fire that surged across the known world. In the south, the troll kingdom of Ustrect allied with the orkish nation of Cara Fahd against the human domain of Landis. Ork tribes earned the name of scorchers as they poured across the land, burning everything they could not carry with them. The dwarves of Scythia allied with humans against Wyrn Wood.

For forty years, the raiders came north. Shosaran forces failed from time to time against the orichalcum raids, but held firm against more serious threats. Banners flew proudly over field after field, as the throne of Shosara was defended to the last elf. Only in Throal were these accomplishments equaled, the rule remaining with the rightful heir during the wars. Ustrect, Cara Fahd, Landis, Scythia, all suffered terribly, some falling never to rise again. In Throal and in Shosara, however, the way of life was preserved, the line held and governance by the proper authorities maintained.

Customs changed during this period. Time spent alone in the wilderness became dangerous. Solitary meditation away from civilization evolved into meditation in buildings set apart for the purpose. Waiting periods were shortened to avoid taking away time from training. Testing for adept aptitudes moved into younger age groups as personnel resources became more valuable than orichalcum. Shosara, however, survived.

Most of the changes were kept after the wars finally died away. Some families resumed the tradition of wilderness ordeals for the rite of maturity; some did not. The meditation houses were maintained, for which everyone would later be grateful. Service in the military ceased to be compulsory when levies were no longer

needed, but some families who had many members in the Shosaran forces took up service as a family tradition. Links with Thera, strengthened during the wars, were also maintained. Shosara saw no reason to change a profitable relationship. This attitude of friendliness toward Thera would have a profound impact just a few hundred years later.

The Scourge

After many years of preparation, increasing danger and hard work, the kaers were at last ready. Horrors had begun to infest the land. This had an unexpected beneficial effect, in that the presence of such dangers drove Shosarans into larger communities for safety. Living in denser populations forced many elves to reconcile their political and ideological differences. If they still disagreed with each other, they did so more politely. For their mutual protection, everyone, Dusibi and Hansa, had to work together.

Other races joined the Shosaran elves in their communities. Name-givers other than elves had shared the lands for many years, but had never lived among the elves before. Now orks and trolls, dwarves and windlings, t'skrang and humans moved into the cities and villages of the elves, seeking the same goal: protection in greater numbers. Shosara's obsidimen retreated to their liferocks to prepare in their own fashion, and so did not take part in the subsequent assimilation. Over time, some of these Name-givers adopted elven customs, taking up the Shosaran way of life. In some places, the newcomers' customs were incorporated into elven ways, so as to make them feel more welcome in the predominantly elvish community. Hospitality is, after all, service to the Passions.

Great deeds were accomplished in the final days. Other volumes record the Names of the heroes who in many cases gave their lives so that Shosara could be protected.

Villages closed their kaers. Cities either were abandoned as the inhabitants sought kaers of their own, or were domed over into citadels. Great care was taken to avoid allowing in anyone possessed by a Horror. In some cases, mistakes were surely made, innocent Name-Givers forbidden entrance and left to the Horrors, or Name-Givers under subtle influence allowed inside to wreak later havoc. Not all of the kaers and citadels survived the Scourge.

Inside the kaers, troubadours recited ballads of the world before the Scourge, so that the children would know what the sun was. Gardens were carefully tended, flowers being grown for their ornamental value alongside vegetables for more mundane use, species being preserved for the great replanting that was to come. The art of remaking paper was invented, so that children could learn the complex elven writing system, and become literate. To this day, Shosarans still reuse their old paper, along with anything else, no matter how small the scrap, that could be remade into something useful. The long years in the kaers taught the elves, already aware of the irreplaceable value of nature and its resources, a new and abiding respect for their environment.

These attitudes were adopted by the other Name-givers in Shosaran kaers. While many retained their own race's rituals of life and death, their way of living, their outlook was affected profoundly by their daily contact with the elves, and by the circumstances under which they lived. By the end of the Scourge, every Name-giver in the surviving kaers had taken up the practice of remaking and reusing everything they could. By conserving their resources, there was more to go around for everyone, and so no one in the kaers went without any basic necessity of life. The spirit of inter-racial cooperation this effort engendered bore fruit after the Scourge, during the Rebuilding.

The races also became familiar with each other's customs. Out of politeness, the elves made their public rituals accessible to all

Name-givers in their kaers, and attended the rituals of other races when allowed. By taking part in each other's rituals, the inhabitants of the kaers built a stronger sense of community. After several generations, it was not unusual to see an elf helping set up the maze for a windling Naming ceremony, or an ork standing sentinel before an elven Meditation House. Many Name-givers assimilated into Shosaran society, while customs from other races were adopted into the elven way. The culture that emerged from the kaers, while predominantly elven, bore traces of the centuries of cohabitation with other Name-givers. Many people of other races thought of themselves as Shosaran, and lived in the Shosaran way, despite their not being elven. Shosara has accepted these people as its own.

On the Loss of Sereatha

One of the greatest cities of Shosara before the Scourge was Sereatha, the City of Spires. Located in the southern reaches of the nation, Sereatha was a center of culture, a gathering place for the best in the realms of the arts. Its many Named spires housed orders dedicated to crafts, to aesthetic pursuits and to the Passions. From the Spire of Justice, the Swords of Justice maintained order and brought the compassion and justice of Mynbruje to the southern lands. Within the Spire of Floranuus, the Learners' Guild sought the inner path, studying the nature of what it meant to be elven. From the Crimson Spire, the Knights of the Crimson Spire taught the traditions and customs of the Shosaran Way, and protected society from those who would forcibly or by treachery disrupt those ways.

Then came the Scourge, and Sereatha prepared in the same fashion as other major Shosaran cities, creating a citadel of true elements to shield the city. Provisions were laid in, gardens were created to preserve flowers, and wardens were appointed to guard against invasion. During the Scourge, the wardens would maintain a watch on the

city's protections, strengthening them if necessary, and keeping vigilant against the possibility of intrusion by Horrors.

Prior to the sealing of the citadel, a particularly subtle Horror managed to gain control of the small daughter of one of the wardens. Years later, as the girl grew into a troubled adolescent, the Horror used her to get at the warden. Fearing the repercussions if it became public knowledge that his daughter's continuing sorrow was the work of a Horror, he allowed the Horror access to his own mind in return for the release of his daughter. Once the Horror had control of the warden, the citadel was quickly breached. The Horror closed the breach behind itself, to keep other Horrors out, and fed slowly for many decades. True to its word, it left the warden's daughter untouched, but consumed the minds of every member of her family.

Eventually, the Horror was slain, but by then other Horrors had discovered the breach. For decades, a desperate battle was waged within the citadel, as more Horrors came in and the population retreated further and further. At last, only a few spires remained inhabited. Then the tides of magic turned, and the Horrors began to withdraw. When the Scourge was declared over and the citadel was opened, there were not enough Name-givers remaining to rebuild the city. As it was, few wanted to remain at the site of so much anguish and death. The survivors of Sereatha abandoned the city and moved north, to merge with the populations of more successful citadels. Only the Knights of the Crimson Spire remained, continuing their sworn duty to protect the elven way of life, and to rid the land of all remaining Horrors.

The tale of the fall of Sereatha was brought to the capitol by a troubadour adept, Lexonda Firricim, one of the survivors, who spent her few remaining years in the hall of the Relievers, never overcoming her sorrow. She said that the warden's daughter, still protected from all harm by the word of the Horror, lived among the ruins of the City of Spires, driven utterly mad by her experiences

and weeping incessantly for the loss of her family and her home.

Post Scourge Exploration

After four hundred and fifty years, within the capitol city's citadel, the mana clock stopped. For the first part of the Scourge, the ball of elemental earth had risen above the dish of elemental water, climbing steadily as the Scourge peaked. Then the tides of magic turned, and the ball began to drop. Wizards and elementalists kept a watch on the mana clock, locked deep within the royal residence in a vault carved into the living rock of the city's foundations. Closer and closer the earth came to the water -- and then it stopped.

For several days the distance was carefully checked. Not one bit did it change. At last, the Warden of the Clock reported to Queen Tsadiye that while the Scourge might or might not be over, the mana field appear to have stabilized. The Queen went to see the clock herself. She gave the matter careful thought, consulted the Bearers, and at last decided that the watch should be continued for another twenty days. If the clock showed no change in that time, an expedition would be mounted to see if the Scourge were indeed over.

Twenty-one days later, volunteers went down into the tunnel to the outside. The first Gate was closed behind them, sealing them off from the citadel. They opened the second Gate, closed it behind them, and opened the third Gate, to the outside. They did not return. Tsadiye declared a week of mourning, and had a memorial pillar erected to the brave explorers in the Court of Heroes.

One year later, a second party went down the tunnel. Again, they passed the first Gate, and the second. Two survivors returned, closing the third Gate on their way back. They told of a world laid waste far beyond anyone's worst imaginings. In some places, they said, there wasn't even soil, just

expanses of raw bedrock. Horrors still roamed abroad, although there were fewer than would be expected if the Scourge were still ongoing. The explorers had found the bones of the first party, and while examining them had been set upon by ravening beasts, all mouths and teeth. The two survivors had fled when the rest of their party fell, and only escaped by sheer speed. Queen Tsadiye heard their tale and ordered a second memorial pillar erected to the fallen. There was no shame, she said, in having survived, or having fled in the face of otherwise certain destruction. She further ordered that five years must pass before a third exploration party would be assembled.

One of the survivors of the second party, Lluenya Sadhooaj, a Swordmaster of the Seventh Circle, volunteered for the third party. When the time came, he led the way through the Gates, closing each one as they went, including the third Gate. After four days, the party returned, having lost three of their members. Lluenya reported that with sufficient force of magic and arms, the surface could now be reclaimed. He recommended an expedition in force to establish a defensive perimeter around the citadel, and that the effort be well underway before the city's defenses were dropped. The Queen conferred with the Bearers, and drew up a plan to begin the return to the outer world. The work would be hard and dangerous, but there would be no trouble finding volunteers. Every Shosaran wanted to see their nation green and healthy once more, and was willing to risk their own lives for that purpose..

Rebuilding

For two years, armed parties scoured the surrounding region, dispatching any Horror or construct they found, calling in reinforcements when necessary. Meanwhile, Questors of Jaspre and Garlen directed the replanting of the land, the construction of new facilities to house the troops and support staff, and the repair of what few

structures remained outside the citadel. Many times, Garlen lent her power to the defense of the barracks, her Questors holding back Horrors until help could arrive.

At long last, however, the tide was turned, the Horrors grown few enough and the perimeter secure enough that Tsadiye ordered the lowering of the citadel and the reopening of the city. On Opening Day, the citizenry gathered to watch as the great elemental shield came down, and Shosirriyey stood open to the world once more. A collective gasp ran through the crowd as the reality of the devastation struck home. No amount of description by those who had been outside could bring to heart the true extent of the damage.

Dry winds scoured the land, carrying stinging storms of ash and sand. Water was hard to find, as rivers had changed course and springs had gone dry. Black clouds hung low over the land, threatening much but delivering little other than lightning and shadow. Violent storms blew up without warning, bringing hail and high winds to undo the difficult work of rebuilding. Hardly a scrap of life was to be found, and what was there had grown defensive, even paranoid. Approaching an animal could cost one's life, at the fangs and claws of something that had been docile, even friendly, before the Scourge. And the smell -- ash and corruption, the funeral pyre of the world.

Shosarans, however, do not give up easily, even in the face of nearly overwhelming adversity. Now that the city was open, and working parties no longer had to pass the Gates of the kaer, rebuilding could begin in earnest. No longer a beachhead, the dwellings outside the walls grew quickly into a settlement, and from there into a greater city, surrounding the citadel with homes and shops, gardens and fountains like the capitol of old. Babies were born at such a rate it seemed that Garlen would have the entire world repopulated in a single century.

Other kaers throughout Shosara were

contacted, one by one. Some inhabitants threw open their doors and gladly pitched in on the work of rebuilding. Others cautiously tested the word of the contact teams, checking to be certain that it was safe for their kaer to be opened. Still others refused to believe the word of outsiders, even bearing the token of the Queen. After all, Horrors were known to be great liars and subtle in their deceptions. Some of these people took many years to convince that the Scourge was over and the rebuilding begun. Some have yet to be convinced. Then there were the kaers that were breached. Very few survivors were found in such, if any. Not all kaers in Shosara were located. Some of the lost kaers may yet survive, not knowing that the Scourge is over. Others may harbor Horrors as yet undiscovered, waiting for their next meal to arrive. Eventually, all of the kaers will be located, and their condition assessed. No Shosaran should be left in their kaer when the world is safe once more, and no Horror should remain alive..

Further Trouble with Invae

In the process of searching out the kaers through the nation, hives of invae were also uncovered. Apparently the Horrors left them unmolested through the Scourge, or perhaps the invae are merely another type of Horror. Whatever the reason, they had firmly entrenched themselves, and met their discovery with savage fighting. This time Shosara did not have the resources of a well-established nation. The invae, on the other hand, had had hundreds of years to prepare.

In some areas, Shosara had to be content to confine the infection and keep it from spreading. Some of the hives were destroyed utterly. Others were invaded by Shosaran forces, only to find that the queen had been spirited away under the cover of the battle. Tracking down their new locations took time, and that time was used by the invae to fortify, to prepare, to breed. The ancient Discipline of the Insect Hunter was taken up by more than elves this time, as Shosarans of

many races took up the quest of driving the invae from our world.

Theran Relations

Shortly after the opening of the capitol citadel, envoys arrived from the Theran Empire. They congratulated Shosara on having survived the Scourge, and indicated that they would be glad to resume the pre-Scourge trading agreements. Queen Tsadiye viewed this with mixed feelings.

Thera had saved the Elves from the Scourge. Alachia had condemned all of southern Elvendom to corruption and pain. On the other hand, the Therans practice slavery. The taking of free will was just too much, and Tsadiye declined to renew the agreements.

The Therans departed in a foul temper, with many threats. Fortunately, her majesty took those threats seriously, so when the first Theran vedettes showed up, Shosara was ready. The skirmishing never turned into a proper war. Shosara repelled the initial Theran attempts. After that, Theran intelligence must have discovered the damage to Shosara's natural resources. With the invae occupying some of the former orichalcum mining regions, and a lack of labor for such work due to the rebuilding, Shosara had little to tempt Thera other than the possibility of slaves. Thera had ample resources in terms of Name-givers closer to home, and left Shosara alone. Relations between Shosara and Thera were never formally severed, just quietly dropped. No embassy was sent from either side.

Now that the fate of the Everliving Flower is known, Shosara has ample reason to hate the Therans, and to send delegations to Throal to pledge support against the Empire. The adventurers who recovered the Flower from the Mist, and the group that took the

Flower from Parlainth to Blood Wood, would be revered as great heroes in Shosara.

Line of Succession

Pre-Separation

PF	Throal	Queen
-299 : -148	-399 : -248	Varea
-148 : -86	-248 : -186	Irute
-86 : 0	-186 : -100	Losira

Post Founding

PF	Throal	Queen
0.08542	-100 : 23	Losira II
123 : 239	23 : 139	Sarisiy I
239 : 362	139 : 262	Syrecia I
362 : 375	262 : 275	Losira III
375 : 530	275 : 430	Losira IV
530 : 713	430 : 613	Sarisiy II
713 : 719	613 : 619	Syrecia II
719 : 890	619 : 790	Losira V
890 : 1152	790 : 1052	Feleana I
1152 : 1247	1052 : 1147	Feleana II
1247 : 1439	1147 : 1339	Losira VI
1439 : 1495	1339 : 1395	Sarisiy III
1495 : 1588	1395 : 1488	Tsadiye
1588 : present	1488 : present	Losira VII

Current Situation

Despite the troubles of the rebuilding, the resurgence of the invae and the political troubles with Thera, Shosara has become again a thriving center of Elven culture. Many other Name-giver races have adopted the Shosaran way, contributing their own interpretations to the rich tapestry that forms our culture. This volume will address the physical and political situation in present-day Shosara, while the next will cover the current state of Shosaran culture.



ON THE GEOGRAPHY OF SHOSARA

Shosara is located far to the north of the province of Barsaive. The land is mountainous, with deep green valleys surrounded by craggy, snow-capped peaks. Before the Scourge, the winters were harsh and long, with snow lying hip-deep by elven measure for half the year. While the climate has been more temperate since the Scourge, powerful storms still sweep down from the north the year round, bring heavy rain and high winds to scour the valley floors. To the north and west are the Douasey Mountains, beyond which lie the frozen lands of Jotun. To the east and north stand the Ticmi Mountains, broken from the Douasey range by the Valley of Ice. The southern reaches of Shosara flatten out into rolling plains and low hills, primarily farming country, intensely worked during the short growing season.

Shosirriyey, the capitol city and original settlement, is located in the rising hills midway between the northern and southern borders, and slightly to the west of the center of the nation. Other major cities include Sensirrac, at the foot of the Douasey, home of the first post-Founding Queen; Dulurny, to the far west, noted for its highly skilled weavers; and Orinicea, in the foothills of the Ticmis, the home of the Silver Lyre. Sereatha, the City of Spires, perhaps the best known of Shosaran cities beyond the nations borders, was lost in the Scourge. Its ruins lie in the south and west of the nation, near the border.

Navigating from point to point within the nation is made easier by the work of Shantaya Nightstar, an elf who in the years before the Scourge mapped Shosara and much of the Theran Empire, and designed a specialized sextant for each region. Her maps have been updated since the Scourge by numerous explorers, most notably Yassal, a troubadour adept from Orinicea. Finding one's way is made more simple by a strange phenomenon known as the Southern Lights: fixed points of light in the sky to the south, in the direction of the province of Barsaive. These cannot be stars, as some scholars insist, as they do not move, neither following the rising and falling of the sun and moon, nor the turning of the year. They remain fixed, constant, a beacon for anyone wishing to know the directions. Explorers who have traveled to the south say that in Barsaive, these lights are visible in all directions, and are used similarly, as navigational guides.

Shosirriyey

The capitol city of Shosara, Shosirriyey spreads itself like a jeweled blanket along the shores of Lake Uretca, just to the west of the geographic center of the nation. Some of its buildings date back to before the Founding, such as the central wing of the Palace, and the Tower of Knowledge. A living museum of the development of the Shosaran architectural style, a walk from the Palace to the edge of the city is like strolling through the past two thousand years. The arts continually surround the citizens, with murals on most walls, sculpture in the gardens and minstrels on many corners. This

is the heart of the nation, without any doubt. The people and the way of life that is Shosara both find their focus here. The city scarcely even naps, with business and recreation going on during even the darkest hours of the night. Politics also goes on through the night, with deals being struck among the various orders and factions that comprise the true government, much the same way that the platoon commanders form the real command of the military. The Crown may dictate policy, and may even dictate law, but the orders handle the implementation and the daily affairs that make the nation run.

Shosirriyey

Home of the Order of the Fallen Rose, Tesraekegoro, the Tower of the Outsiders, was built in the first few years after the Founding, in the older crenellated style that was used before the city wall was distant enough to have non-defensible buildings. It stands at the southwest corner of the Palace grounds, actually straddling the property line, half in Royal territory and half in private. The plain granite of its walls was chosen to minimize the visual impact of the building, although it can't help being slightly impressive. The only outward decoration is the sigil of the Fallen Rose inlaid in semi-precious stone mosaic over each of the primary entrances, the one facing the Palace and the one facing the city.

Inside, the entry hall goes straight through from one side to the other, and holds some of the larger pieces of the Order's collection, along with portraits of each of the current Bearers. To the left is the Hall of Assembly, where the full Order meets to debate policy and to hold their larger ceremonies. To the right are the parlors, where members of the Order meet with citizens and representatives of other Orders and nations for less formal discussions of business. Upstairs, the reception hall and the small-items collection occupy the second level and the library and private parlor the third. The offices and apartments of the Bearers and their staff take up the fourth through eighth levels. The top of the tower is wholly occupied by the Chamber of the Rose, where the Bearers meet in privy council. All around the room, mullioned windows give a clear view of the Palace and the city, to keep their responsibilities before the Bearers while they debate. Strong wards and bound elementals guard the tower, along with a detachment from the Order of the Brand. The Chamber at the top is guarded by the Companions of the Brand, by long-ago agreement with the Crown.

Collegium of the Quill

Due north of the Palace, and separated

from it by a city block originally occupied by troop barracks and now by small, exclusive shops and taverns, stands the huddle of square stone buildings comprising the Collegium of the Quill. Most of the structures face inward, toward the central Hall of Records, turning their backs on the city and its political influences. Here, the Order of the Quill has its focus, its council chambers and offices, and the residences of its top officers.

Going sunwise from the easternmost, one first encounters the home of the Council Chair. A modest two-story house, with part of the ground level being given over to the Privy Council Chamber where the officers meet, it serves as home currently to Eraeolia Ozilnas, an elven woman of advanced years who has been with the Order of the Quill since her youth, first as a junior clerk, then a clerk in the Hall of Records, moving on to positions as a Rite recorder, proctor and administrator, and finally to the Council, where she was elected chair fifty-seven years ago on the death of her predecessor. The Order is her life; she has never married nor borne children. Far from being a recluse, however, she is strongly active in politics and the arts, as an outspoken proponent of the Shosaran way. Since she cannot join a Hansa political group without violating Quill bylaws, she sponsors artists, especially performers, who have definite Hansa inclinations themselves. In Royal Court, she normally argues for the established order, believing firmly that the way of life worked out over the past fifteen hundred years is perfectly functional just the way it is and needs no massive readjustments, as the radical Dusibi would like.

Next around the circle is the residence of the Pursewarden. Even more humble than the home of the Council Chair, it has but one level, and the bylaws of the order require the Pursewarden to obtain Council permission for any expenditure on the house or its furnishings. The current Pursewarden, Totevah Gemuti, finds this frequently annoying. He argues in Council that a simple review of the books should be sufficient to

allow him to hire someone to muck out the garderobe on his own. Unfortunately, he's usually so busy with the accounts of the Order that he doesn't have the time for hiring, and so is dependent on the staff appointed by the Council whether he likes it or not.

The next four buildings straddle a gap in the ring, the street that leads to the front of the Hall of Records. They house the remaining Council members who reside in the capitol city, two to each of the three-story buildings with one floor of apartments for each Council member and the ground level given over to common facilities. Currently only five Council members are living in these houses, with the other three apartments standing vacant. The remaining Councillors live in outlying towns and travel to Shosirriyey as necessary.

Beside holding the central offices of the Order of the Quill, the Collegium also serves as a repository for documents of public record. Anyone who wishes to register a deed to land or property, a bann of marriage, a will or claim or title, may file with the Order of the Quill. The master copies of all such documents are sent to the Collegium, where they are kept in the Hall of Records, at the center of the Collegium, for any citizen to inspect at will. Public access to such documents is felt to be vital to the Shosaran way of life. Any citizen may verify a public record on their own, enhancing the independence of the individual. Honesty is also encouraged, as people who file accurate records with the Quill are less likely to have legal troubles over the issues later. The documents can be produced to settle the argument without having to go to a judge. Apprentices and journeymen of the Order of the Silver Scales are constant visitors to the Hall of Records, checking on documents for those issues that have gone before a judge or to the court. The Hall is definitely the most impressive building on the Collegium grounds, a full six levels of document storage, clerks and copyists, researchers and administrators, and the Council Chamber of

the Order, the building is of the same grey stone as the remainder of the Collegium, but is faced with white granite and surrounded by a colonnade of matching stone. Inside, dark wood paneling lines the walls, holding down the noise as dozens of Name-givers come and go, and light quartzes in lanterns of pale blue glass shed a gentle light, bright enough to read by but kind to the eyes. Outside, a good deal of business is settled in between the columns, as food vendors and strolling artists add to the confusion. The contrast between the racket and chaos outside and the quietly frantic activity inside has been known to stop more than one person on the doorsill to readjust.

Emerald Hall

Part of the Palace, the Emerald Hall takes up most of the ground level of the north wing. So-called because of the green marble, serpentine and aventurin used in its construction, accents of gold set off the columns and decorative moldings. The ceiling is taken up by a mosaic depicting the crowning of Losira II. Massive bronze doors done in verdigris and sculpted with scenes from the founding of Shosirriyey open through the south wall, giving access from the central hall of the Palace. At the north is a dais, taken up with musicians during balls and with the throne and court during formal functions. Bound air elementals keep the air circulating, for freshness, warmth in the winter and cooling in the summer, as well as to hold down the echoes in the vaulted chamber. All of the large events of the court are held here, those that are attended by very many people or guests that the crown wishes to impress.

The Hall is also where the Order of the Yellow Sash holds most of its functions. An alcove in the west wall holds the sash of the first Companion, set in a case of crystal residing under the royal arms painted in mural.

Collegium of Shosara

In the south of the capitol city, the

Collegium consists of a dozen buildings surrounding a park regularly frequented by students. The oldest institution of higher learning in the nation, among other distinctions the Collegium maintains the Archives of Shosara, the largest library in the country, and the Chronicles of Shosara, a continuing history of the nation amended daily as events unfold. The Chronicler inherits a position at court with his office, as the chief historian of the nation.

The Division of Philosophy has included Bearers of the Fallen Rose among its faculty, and has in the past advised the crown on complicated issues of morality. The Division of Mathematics maintains close ties to the Order of the Square. Many of its graduates go on to become leading architects of the Order. Research done in the Division of Arcane Sciences contributes to the defense of the nation and further understanding of the Scourge. Magicians come from all across the nation to study their arts and to use the library, whose collection of arcane writings extends back to before the Founding. Adventurers also come here in search of magical knowledge to complete their quests.

Jade Hall

Home of the Order of the Jade Mask, the Hall is an unprepossessing brown stone building in the southern quarter of the city, its only outer distinction being the inlaid adventurine mask to the right of the main entrance. The entry hall is lined with display cases and larger, wall-mounted trophies of the Invae Wars and other actions of the Order, including the cranial exoskeleton of a queen invae. The more precious relics, including the Jade Mask of the Order's founder, are enshrined upstairs. Beside the collection, the upper levels of the main building also house the apartments of the officers of the Order, guesting rooms for visiting members, and a library dedicated to knowledge concerning the invae. Behind the Hall proper are the stables, the smithy, the practice yard and other support facilities, where the non-Adept members of the Order

ply their crafts, and the Adepts hone their Talents for the inevitable confrontations with their chosen enemies.

The Order does its best to be completely self-sufficient, having its own elementalists and weaponsmiths for the production of magical gear and weapons, its own beastmasters and cavalymen for training in the handling of animals, its own archers and swordmasters for assistance in close fighting, and its own non-adept support troops for large-scale actions. Only a tenth of the actual membership of the Order are Insect Hunter Adepts, and so the facilities must necessarily be large to accomodate all of these additional personnel. Jade Hall proper is only the front building of the complex, but it is what most people think of as the home of the Order.

Hall of the Relievers

Located on the northeast side of the city, the Hill takes up an entire block all of its own. Three stories high, faced with white granite, it's surrounded by a two-story colonnade of the same stone, giving the Hall a guarded, remote appearance. Over the main entrance is the Cauldron of the Order, inlaid in a single massive piece of black marble, an impressive bit of stonework. The Hall is laid out as a hollow square, with interior balconies and galleries, and a park in the middle where patients can find a safe haven in which to recuperate. At the far corner of the park is a grove of trees, a heavily warded place where those with injured minds may find solace. Children whose parents were slain by raiders, victims of Horror or Invae incursions, and others similarly traumatized are treated here, in the hopes that they can one day rejoin society. Elsewhere in the building are patient rooms, treatment areas including hot and cold baths, saunas, exercise rooms and herbariums. Living quarters for the Relievers are generally on the top floor, as the staff are more likely to be able to handle the stairs than the patients. Teaching rooms are similarly located. Classes are offered in healing, herb gardening, home management, cooking and child care, free of

charge, although a donation to the Order is encouraged for those with the coin.

Sensirrac

At the foot of the Douasey Mountains lies the city of Sensirrac, home of Losira II, the first post-Founding Queen. Smaller than Shosirriyey, Sensirrac was originally a trading point for commerce between the lowland elves and the highland trolls. It still serves this function, although the trade is not the primary business in town. Like any city, there are craftsmen and artists, brewers and painters and carpenters and masons, bakers and cobblers and glass-blowers.

Metalworking and the export of refined metals and finished goods are linchpins of the city's economy. The mountains just outside of town are rich with veins of ore. Since the Scourge, the mines have also been a venue of employment for mercenaries and adventurers, as unpleasant creatures are frequently encountered deep in the shafts or in the forests between the mines and the city.

Many Hansa and not a few Dusibi make pilgrimages to Sensirrac to visit the Shrine of the Founding, erected at the birthplace of Losira II by the townsfolk. Founding Day is viewed with mixed feelings in this city. It marks the fall of the Wood Court and the death of Losira I, but it also marks the accession of Losira II and the establishment of Shosara as an independent nation. The mood in the city can become explosive, as both factions indulge in too much wine and become moody and argumentative. Every year, debates between Hansa and Dusibi end up with at least one street brawl being broken up by the guards.

Citadel of the Upper Path

While not actually in Sensirrac, it's the closest city to the Citadel. Retreat and principal home of the Followers of the Upper Path, the fortress-like Citadel perches high on the side of Mount Elation, two days' ride

north into the Douasey range from the edge of the city. Within, the members of the Order pursue their studies into the deeper mysteries of the Shosaran way, as well as growing food, brewing beer and tending their flocks.

The Order is not completely self-sufficient, as they must trade wool and cheese from their sheep and goats for metal goods and other items that they do not have the facilities to produce. Legend has it that they are also paid annually by the crown to keep watch over a collection of pre-Scourge artifacts and documents, items deemed too dangerous to be stored in a populated area. It is certainly true that the Order has a slightly higher percentage of Adepts among its membership than among the general populace, although this could be because adepts are more likely to retire to a life of quiet contemplation than the average citizen.

Dulurny

At the western border of the nation, in a region of long, narrow, steep-sided valleys separated by sharp ridges like the edge of a knife, lies the town of Dulurny. Visitors coming over the pass from the east are struck by the village seeming to be turned on its edge, as Dulurny is not at the bottom of the ravine, occupied by an icy river fed by snowmelt, but instead climbs both walls at the high end of the valley.

The diet here tends to consist primarily of fish, goat, mutton, and cheese made from goat and sheep milk, with local strains of berries being cultivated intensely during the brief summer. Most vegetables are either hardy root crops that can survive the harsh weather, or are grown in greenhouses and are thus pricey and scarce. Dulurny trades for a good deal of preserved food, brought in by caravan over the pass or by airship coming up the valley, exporting textiles of wool and goathair. With most of the year being taken up by winter, the people of Dulurny have long hours to practice indoor

crafts. Their weavers and dyers are among the best in the nation, turning out clothing, tapestries, rugs and decorative hangings of exquisite workmanship. Many a citizen elsewhere has paid a month's wages for a sweater from Dulurny, guaranteed to work every bit as well as clothing knit with elemental fire for keeping one warm, and much more attractive.

The townsfolk protect their flocks savagely, depending upon their animals for much of their livelihood. On a few occasions, they have sent as far as Shosirriyey for adepts to come and slay large predators that were beyond their own capabilities. While the pay for such a task is great, however, the risk is of equal stature. The quarry of the hunt may be the least of the dangers. The bitter cold, sudden storms and avalanches have taken more toll than the northern brithans.

Orinicea

In the foothills of the Ticmis, the golden spires of Orinicea rise like lost rays trying to return to the sun. The dark red ceramic tiles of the steeply pitched roofs in between the spires contribute to the appearance of flames frozen in place. This is very much a city whose patron Passions are Floranuus and Astendar, a place of motion and grace, revelry and music, a determination to enjoy life in the face of all that may come. The inhabitants need every bit of that stubborn refusal to break under the strain, considering their surroundings.

Just outside the city, as the mountains rise sharply, stands the site of the first great victory of the Invae Wars, the empty hive where the first insect queen was slain. Orinicea has been in the midst of the battle ever since. The Order of the Jade Mask maintains a training and mobilization facility in the city, at its northern edge. The fields between the city wall and the first steep slopes are untilled, kept bare partially to avoid providing cover and possible nourishment to encroaching invae, and partially because every time a crop has been planted there, the national military has had to camp atop it on maneuvers against the insects.

A good four stories high, and topped with a battlemented walk, the city wall is a grim reminder of reality that the inhabitants must face each day. In typical Orinicean fashion, they have painted the interior of the wall with murals, hung tapestries on it and even written poems on it, all in an attempt to find enjoyment in their lives no matter how tough the situation may be. Orinicea is home to the Order of the Silver Lyre, the pre-eminent bardic organization in the northeastern part of the nation. Several times a year, the Order holds a festival, partially to keep up the spirits of the populace and partially as a Rite of Progress for their members and potential members. While the risk of having so many outsiders come into the city is great, the benefits are equally great, and the Order of the Jade Mask takes advantage of the opportunity to hone their own abilities in sniffing out potential Brethren and invae.

Hall of the Lyre

Down in the southern end of the city, at the southern edge of Astendar's Field, stands the home of the Order of the Silver Lyre, a three-story triangular stone hall with spires at all three corners. The repetition of the number is symbolic of the three requirements of performance -- skill in presentation, knowledge of material, and sensitivity to the audience. Each spire also houses the master of an aspect of performance. The Master of Instruments resides in the northwestern spire, the Master of Voice in the northeastern, and the Master of Composition in the southern. Each spire also holds workshops, studios and libraries appropriate to its aspect. For example, students learn how to build their own instruments in the northwest spire, while the folios of music arranged for group performance are kept in the southern spire. The Master of the Order resides in the main hall, at the center of the top floor. His quarters house not only him but the artifacts held by the Order deemed to be too dangerous or powerful to be left in the general collections in the spires.



THE ART OF SHOSARAN POLITICS

The principle division remains that between the Dusibi and the Hansa. As before the Scourge, the Dusibi seek reunification with Wyrn Wood, now Blood Wood, while the Hansa deny that any court exists in the Wood to reconcile with. Alachia's corruption of the elves of the Wood strengthened the Hansa position substantially. The Dusubi remain a minority in Shosara, although a determined one. It would be un-elfen to deny the possibility that their viewpoint may be valid.

The two primary factions have split into many smaller ones internally. The Dusibi divide themselves among those who would obtain approval for the directions that Shosaran culture has taken, and those who would bring Shosara into line with other elven ways. This second group further divides into old and new traditionalists, based on which version (pre or post Scourge) of the elven ways from the Wood they prefer. The Hansa split between the conservatives who want the Wood to acknowledge Shosara as an equal, the radicals who would be happy if the Wood completely ceased to exist, and the moderates who want nothing to do with the Wood at all.

There are sects within both Dusibi and Hansa who are searching for a way to reverse the Ritual of the Thorns, each for their own ends. The Dusibi faction wants to redeem the fallen Court in Blood Wood, return it to its former glory, and win reunification through the efforts. Motives for the Hansa sect are less noble. Radicals in the Hansa are seeking the cure for the thorns to sway elves from the Blood Wood to their cause. By healing them of the thorns, the Hansa radicals feel that they can convince the former Blood Elves of the corruption of Alachia and the rightness of the Shosaran way

The fall of the Court did not mean the end of the Elven people or the Elven way. We were developing our own way of life before the death of Dallia and the Separation. We can carry on even though the fallen Court has become as corrupt outwardly as they previously were inwardly. The Elven way cannot be static - we must grow and change, just like all other life does, in order to survive. The Separation was the most obvious sign that the Court had lost its own way. No true Elf would ever reject another Elf solely because of differences in living. Of course, the Hansa who dislike the Blood Elves would argue with this line of thinking. They say that Blood Elves are no longer Elves at all, and that rejecting them is natural, the healthy rejecting the diseased. But Blood Elves are still Elves, in Name as well as in being. It is not Elven to turn away those in need of healing. We must heal the Thorns, the corruption and return the Court to its former glory. Only then can the Elven people be healed of the breach within them.

-- Shimgwe Trinocia, Master Lutist, Order of the Silver Lyre

There is a faction that wants Shosara to take up the mantle of the fallen Court, and proclaim what is elven once again, to provide guidance to a people lost and alone. However, the majority feels that this would recreate the situation that spawned the Separation. No central authority should attempt to proclaim a single lifestyle, a single way for all elves. To do so is to risk divergence, rebellion, corruption and schism once again.

-- Friyu Taidij, Order of the Purple Iris, Collegium of Shosara

Orders

Theoretically independent of the political factions are the Orders. Some would say that true power lies with the orders rather than with the crown, but those who do are not aware of the restrictions placed on the orders, nor of the complex system of checks and balances that make up the Shosaran governmental structure.

Orders are a key facet of Shosaran society. Some are scholarly, some military, some social, some based on belief and others on talent. All serve the purpose of uniting Name-givers with a common purpose. In other lands, such organizations are known as guilds, collegia, schools and unions, but in Shosara they are simply Orders. Each has its own Name, its own pattern, its own hall, and a well-defined purpose within Shosaran society.

To join an Order, a Shosaran must demonstrate the capability to perform within that order's function. This is normally done through a Rite of Progress, administered by the Order of the Quill. Some orders may waive the Rite of Progress for potential members who have demonstrated their abilities beyond any doubt. The Order of the Brand, for example, will take any Shosaran who has shown great prowess in battle, not only in might of arms but in cleverness of tactics. The Order of the Silver Lyre will occasionally invite musicians and lyric poets of surpassing talent to join.

Each order sets its own standards for its membership, for joining and for progress through its ranks. The bylaws of each order are kept on file with the Order of the Quill, which makes these documents available to the general populace, so that anyone interested in an order can easily discover the requirements thereof. Within an order, the administration has authority over its members to the extent specified in the bylaws, normally only extending to the sphere of the order itself. No order may cross

authority with another, nor conflict with the general laws of the nation or the will of the crown.

Some orders have exclusive membership. If a Shosaran joins that order, they are restricted from joining others. In some cases, the duties may conflict with those of other orders. Some simply require total commitment to their goals.

The more prominent orders are profiled here, to give the reader a clear picture of the flow of power and the structure of Shosaran society.

Order of the Fallen Rose

Consisting of the most well-accomplished members of other orders, the Order of the Fallen Rose have been the guardians of Elven culture since the Separation. They carry on the traditions, guided by a council known as the Bearers of the Fallen Rose. All rituals and revisions of existing traditions must be approved by the Order before they can become part of the Shosaran way.

The Order of the Fallen Rose chooses the heir to the Shosaran throne. The Queen can put forth a candidate, but the Order retains final approval. They can, by unanimous vote, demand the abdication of the throne. This has only happened once in the history of Shosara, ending the reign of Syrecia II. The events leading to the forced abdication of the crown are beyond the scope of this chapter, but it is worth noting that there has been no Queen to rule under the Name of Syrecia since. Bearers of the Fallen Rose form the primary advisory body to the crown, and cannot be dismissed. If an advisor has something to say that the crown does not like, it probably needs to be heard.

The Order has its headquarters in Tesraekgoro, the Tower of the Outsiders, in the capitol.

Emblem: A rose with a broken stem. Bearers add a hand supporting the rose.

Regalia: Members of the Fallen Rose wear the emblem of the order embroidered on their clothing, usually discreetly placed on the collar or cuff. Frequently, they prefer items of clothing in colors of rose and green. Bearers of the Rose wear a sash of rose edged with green on formal occasions.

Order of the Quill

Scholars and clerks, proctors and ritual specialists, the Quill maintains all public documents for the government and the other orders. Copying services and scribes for recording transcripts of meetings, hearings, and other gatherings of public record are provided by the order. Its members see that the proper forms are followed in all rites and examinations. Quill halls are maintained in every city in the nation, with the central collegium being located in the capitol.

The Quill oversees the Rite of Progress for all orders and offices that use a Rite, testing candidates for fitness for office, for promotion and for membership in the orders. All orders that examine candidates for admission or promotion with a formal Rite of Progress must file their specifications with the Order of the Quill, and have the rite conducted by proctors from the Quill.

Schooling of the young is also provided by the Quill. Literacy in Sperethiel is ensured, as well as in other racial languages in advanced classes. Basic scholarly abilities and history of the nation are taught without charge to all Name-giver children regardless of race. The crown allocates funds to the Quill to help provide these services. In addition, charges from scribe services and donations from other Orders keep basic knowledge readily available.

What isn't quite said here is that every child who attends Quill schooling is indoctrinated in Shosaran politics at an early age. Also, note that while Sperethiel is taught to everyone, other languages are only available at the "advanced" level -- which must be paid for by the student or the student's parents.

-- *Kheshtin Korvall, Order of the Horned Skull*

Another thing that isn't spoken of aloud is that the willingness of the Quill proctors to pass candidates attempting to Progress is directly related to the size and frequency of the donations made by the order. If you don't pay off the Quill, your order develops a high failure rate.

-- *Azeat Xellodoi, Swordmaster, City of Dulurny*

The Order of the Quill is completely exclusive. No member of the Quill may belong to any other order. This prevents conflicts of interest from arising regarding the Rite of Progress and other public functions.

Emblem: An open scroll, slanting from left down to right, with a white quill, point down, crossing it slanting opposite. Council members tip and edge the quill with gold.

Regalia: The emblem is worn embroidered on the collar of clothing, on a dark grey sash for formal occasions, and as a brooch.

Order of the Yellow Sash

Personal attendants to the Queen, members of the Sash are chosen by the crown from candidates put up by the order. Occasionally the crown will pick out a likely candidate from the populace that catches the eye of the Queen, but this is a rare occurrence. Members are judged on poise, grace, intelligence, skill at sophisticated games and dance, fashion sense, and compatibility with the current Queen and other members of the order.

Companions of the Yellow Sash serve as social contacts for the Queen. Dressing for affairs of state is sometimes handled by the Companions, dismissing the Queen's usual dressing maids. They also provide diversion from the stress of rule, assisting the Queen in relaxing. The order reminds the crown of the necessity of spending time in aesthetic pursuits as well as practical ones. As such,

they help maintain the Shosaran way at court.

Most of the social functions of the court are planned and supervised by the Companions. They serve as organizers of banquets, dances, art exhibitions, receptions and concerts. The Order maintains its offices within the Palace in Shosirriyey. Many of its functions are held in the Emerald Hall.

Regalia: The order's members wear a sash of deep yellow silk. Council members add a gold badge in the shape of a crown adorned with berry leaves, with the chair of the council surmounting the badge with a gavel. The Pursewarden of the order adds a key underneath the crown.

Collegium of Shosara

A noble institution with a long and proud tradition of impeccable scholarship, the Collegium is the principle center of learning in the nation. Founded shortly after the original planting of the northern colony that eventually became Shosara, the Collegium has the distinction of being the only such establishment older than the nation itself. All other collegia date from after the colony evolved into the nation of Shosara.

The Collegium performs several vital functions. First, it trains the nation's leading scholars and researchers. The finest minds in Shosara come to the Collegium to prepare for careers in the academic field. History, philosophy, the magical arts, mathematics; the lore of the world comes under examination. Second, the Collegium maintains the Archives of Shosara, the largest library in the nation. Within it are copies of every work of note produced within the borders. As well, the Chronicles of Shosara, being a detailed history of events on a daily basis, are maintained by the Office of the Chronicler. This historical resource is consulted by nearly every order and governmental office at one point or another. Third, the Collegium supports research in the arts. Many great developments in the field of

magic have been accomplished at the Collegium.

Status within the Collegium is by office and position within the office. Rites of Progress are held twice yearly so that talented individuals can rise quickly through the organization. Progress is also tested for research projects, with those projects passing the Rite continuing to be funded throughout the next six months.

If you can't show results within the first six months, nine times out of ten your project will be sent to the remakers. Only those with proven records in the field or excellent connections can get past a Rite without showing significant progress in their work.

-- Osganiyar Valentevin, Elementalist, Office of Architecture and Engineering, Collegium of Shosara

Passing the Rite to enter the Collegium as a student only requires showing potential for the field to be studied. Fees for study are kept low thanks to generous support from the crown. Advancement to an office brings a stipend, initially modest, but growing with rank. This system of supporting teachers through an organization rather than directly by the students has proven most effective in establishing a high standard of excellence.

Bosh. All it does is allow people to hang about doing nothing as long as they give a lecture every so often. Note that you don't have to pass the Rite in order to keep an office, just to get it. Something really should be done about that.

-- Errin Evkritne, Scribe, Order of the Quill

Emblem: A purple iris with gold edging, on a field of pale blue.

Regalia: Teachers and other office-holders wear the emblem embroidered prominently on their clothing. Dress of course varies according to the profession or Discipline of the teacher, so placement also varies. The emblem is also displayed on a pale blue sash for formal occasions, with insignia appropriate to the office added below. A shield bearing the emblem hangs in

the Great Hall at the center of the Collegium facilities, long ago determined to be the Core Pattern Item for the Collegium. Heavy ensorcelments have been placed on the shield to protect it as a result.

Order of the Brand

Dating back before the Founding, the Order of the Brand sets the standard for heroism and brilliance in battle for Shosara. Comprised of adepts of the warrior, swordmaster and archer Disciplines, and of military leaders and those who have distinguished themselves singularly upon the field of combat, the Brand represents all that those who take up war as an occupation strive to be. The order's standards are the ruler by which every soldier is measured.

The leaders of the Brand advise the crown on tactics and military strategy. Leaders for the regular forces are customarily drawn from the Brand. Membership in the order counts for much when taking the Rite of Progress for advancement in military rank.

Within the order, rank is determined by a Rite of Progress that measures not only fighting ability but cleverness and inventiveness in battle. Board games and table-top battle reconstructions are used to test the minds of the candidates, while tournaments open to the public test their physical capabilities. Rising to a position of leadership within the order requires the candidate to have seen service in the Shosaran military, in a command capacity.

Gaining membership in the order can be done by a Rite of Progress. Frequently, however, the leaders of the order offer membership to those who have caught their attention through deeds in battle. More than one adventurer has been offered membership in the Brand once their legend has begun to spread. Members of the Brand include adepts of all Disciplines as a result, although only adepts of the fighting Disciplines customarily rise to the top of the order.

Within the order is an exclusive fighting unit, the Companions of the Brand. Progress is not allowed into the Companions. Membership must be offered by the existing Companions. The candidate is tested severely in all fields relating to war, and upon passing the test must swear blood allegiance to the Companions. The unit serves at the behest of the crown, taking their orders directly from the reigning Queen. They act as honor guards for the Queen, as well as taking care of problems that require their unique capabilities. Companions of the Brand have seen service in the most dangerous of conflicts, frequently laying down their lives for the good of Shosara.

Not all of their service is within the borders, either.

-- Davisian Perossya, Scout Adept

The Brand is not exclusive, welcoming members of other martial orders. Its leaders have included Bearers of the Fallen Rose, and members have come from all of the fighting orders as well as non-military orders.

Emblem: A mailed fist holding a flaming torch, set inside a dark green oval with a gold border.

Regalia: Members of the Brand bear the order's emblem on the right shoulder of their armor, in the upper right corner of their shields, and on a deep blue sash for formal occasions. Leaders of the Brand add rank insignia below the emblem. Adepts will place insignia representing their Discipline between the emblem and their rank markings -- crossed swords for a swordmaster, a bow with arrow nocked for archers, and a hammer superimposed on a shield for warriors. Companions of the Brand add a crown above the order's emblem.

Order of the Jade Mask

Named after the jade mask carved by Levakar Telerestian, the first Insect Hunter, the Jade Mask is dedicated to the Discipline

of the Insect Hunter. The mask, which is now the Core Pattern Item for the entire Order, is enshrined in the Jade Hall in Shosirriyey.

Membership is restricted to adepts of the Insect Hunter Discipline and those studying the Discipline. The Rite of Progress to enter the order is one of the toughest in the nation. The candidate's fitness for the Discipline and commitment to the order's purpose are both tested harshly. Less than half of those testing for admission actually enter the order, and of those, only a tenth become adept Hunters. The rest work in support positions, as supply clerks, horse trainers, farriers, and infantry.

The Jade Mask is completely exclusive. Its bylaws require absolute and total dedication to the destruction of the invae. The founders felt that membership in any other order would distract the hunters from their true purpose, a distraction that could prove disastrous for the individual and for the nation as a whole.

Emblem: A deep green mask of frightening aspect, its features twisted in a snarl of combative defiance.

Regalia: The emblem is worn as an enameled pin on the collar. On formal occasions, the members of the order wear a large brooch on a green sash, while the adepts of the order wear dark green tunics with the mask embroidered on the breast in gold.

Order of the Silver Lyre

Headquartered in the city of Orinicea, the Silver Lyre is the preeminent bardic order in the northeast of Shosara. Accepting performing artists of any style or Discipline, the order serves as a professional guild, providing training, evaluation and a market for its members. People in the region wishing to retain the services of a performer frequently do so through the auspices of the Lyre.

Lyre members travel a lot and nobody thinks anything of it. This gives them ample

opportunity to observe and to carry information.

-- Valite Renasbey, Scout Adept

Emblem: A silver lyre, strung with gold, on a red field.

Regalia: Members wear the badge of the order as a large brooch on their clothing, usually on the right shoulder or on a hat over the right eye. More ornate representations, such as a red tabard with the emblem emblazoned on both front and back, are used for performances and formal occasions. Officers of the order include the council, who cross the lyre with a quill; the Pursewarden, who bears a set of scales above the lyre; and the masters of the various arts, who add representations of their craft below the lyre.

Order of the Horned Skull

A political rather than professional order, the Horned Skull is the most active of the troll organizations. Members of the Horned Skull form part of the royal court, representing the interests of troll Shosarans to the crown. Acting as advocates for their race, Skull members intercede with the ministries and other orders that make up Shosaran government, seeking fair and equitable treatment of their people.

Well connected, the Skull also intercedes with private concerns, assisting trolls in finding gainful employment and markets for their crafts and artistic pursuits. Skull advocates also represent troll citizens in legal affairs, whether providing assistance in contractual matters or acting as representatives in courts of law. The order maintains relationships with officials that the average citizen simply does not have the time to pursue.

What it comes down to is this. If you're a troll and you want to get something done, you go through the Skull. They'll go to some lengths to get you out of trouble if you lose your temper over an insult, but don't expect them to anger the magistrate if you're clearly in the wrong, as far as the elves are concerned.

-- *Haxin Tonk, Warrior Adept, Order of the Brand*

Emblem: A skull with two large, curving horns emerging from the forehead, set against a black field.

Regalia: Members of the Order of the Horned Skull generally wear the emblem as an embroidered patch on the right breast of their clothing, or in the form of enameled brooches as clasps for a cloak. For formal occasions, the emblem is worn on both sides of the collar of a black tabard, trimmed in silver. Officers wear a hammer pin below the emblem for Council members, a silver disc for the Pursewarden and crossed hammers for the chair of the council. By long-standing tradition, the chair of the council wraps his horns with silver leaf before making appearances before the crown.

Order of the Reclaiming

Dedicated to restoring Blood Wood to its pre-Scourge glory and cleansing it of its corruption, the Reclaimers are a radical Dusibi faction who formed an Order after the Scourge for efficiency of organization. They send representatives to the Wood to study the effects of the blood magics used during the Scourge, many of whom pay for their knowledge with their lives. The Wood holds its secrets dear. The Reclaimers also study the effects of the Ritual of the Thorns within Shosara's own borders, some of their members (the mistishsa se'samriel) going so far as to take the Ritual themselves in order to provide subjects for study. They hope one day to find a way to undo the Ritual and restore the blood elves to normal existence.

Emblem: Three roses, one a bud, one half open and one in full bloom, successively red, yellow and white.

Regalia: The emblem is normally carried on jewelry that can be removed and easily hidden. Only for Shosaran court appearances is it worn openly, embroidered on a black

sash or a black tabard. Officers of the order do not modify the emblem, relying on recognition of their Names as sufficient identification. Even within Shosara, the Wood's agents occasionally take action against the Reclaimers.

Order of Grace

In a society that prizes the celebration of love and beauty as much as Shosara, it is not surprising that an order would be formed specifically for this purpose. The Order of Grace is composed of Questors of Astendar and the cream of Shosara's poets, musicians, artists, music-hall hosts and other professional aesthetes. Only those who have already proven themselves in aesthetic pursuits need apply, although application itself has disqualified Name-givers from membership in the past. Far better to wait until an invitation comes.

Rising like the sun on the fog of despair brought by the Scourge, the Order of Grace saw more than one kaer through its darkest days, when the Horrors, unable to reach the bodies of those within the kaers, attacked their minds. Inspiring love, hope and faith, the Order countered the darkness brought by the Horrors and enabled the Name-givers to survive. After the Scourge, the Order of Grace were among the first to begin the replanting of gardens, the repair of statuary and the replenishment of Shosara's aesthetic heritage.

Today, the Order of Grace provides a standard for those who share in the interests of the Passion of Love, Art and Beauty. Their exhibitions of painting and sculpture feature the best of the nation. Gatherings organized and hosted by them guarantee an excellent experience for those fortunate enough to receive invitations. Training is offered (for a fee) in all of the arts, those of static nature, of theatrical presentation and of love. Not content to focus on one field of aesthetic endeavor, the Order's members are cross-trained in many aspects of Love and Beauty, and can offer expert advice on everything

from choosing the right sculpture to complete a room's decor, to cosmetic application, to the right words to speak to win the heart of another.

Emblem: A white dove in flight on a pale blue background.

Regalia: The emblem is worn as jewelry, as a brooch to hold a cloak, on a necklace or an armlet or bracelet. For presentations or formal occasions, the emblem is embroidered on a sash of pale blue silk. Officers of the order add a silver border around the emblem and silver edging on the sash. Specialties are indicated with sigils below the emblem, such as a lute for a troubadour or a brush and palette for a painter.

Order of the Square

Followers of Upandal, the Order of the Square consists of architects, engineers, contractors, masons, carpenters and decorators, those who build and make buildings livable. The Order provides training in the various crafts represented in return for service, which is usually taken as service to the crown. In return, the crown grants the Order right of first refusal on government building contracts, and dispensations regarding taxes and military service. Any member of the Square who has worked or is currently employed on a crown project to the satisfaction of the masters of the Order is exempted from levy in time of war.

Masters of the Order are determined by seniority and by accomplishments. Past projects are evaluated during the Rite of Progress for advancement. Teams of inspectors from the Order, together with proctors from the Quill, visit the site of major works, to determine the quality and stability of the construction. Smaller works are examined within the Order's hall if at all possible, and again quality of workmanship and design are considered. Those whose devotion to Upandal is proven through works receive advancement.

Emblem: A mason's square, angle turned up, above which a crossed hammer and stone chisel.

Regalia: The emblem is carved into the primary tools of members of the Order. It is frequently embroidered in silver thread on their working clothing, on the front of caps, on the shoulder of tunics, and on the breast pocket of aprons. Formal occasions find the emblem born on a tabard, usually of leather with the design tooled rather than embroidered. Officers add black edging around the emblem, the primary tool for masters of a craft, scales for the Pursewarden and an anvil for the Master of the Order, all below the emblem.

Bringers of Mercy and Relief

Known more familiarly as the Relievers, the Bringers of Mercy and Relief are followers and Questors of the Passion Garlen. From their halls, they journey into the community and into the countryside to bring healing, counseling and aid to the Name-Givers of Shosara. They freely teach their skills to anyone willing to learn, surviving on the donations of those grateful for their services, and on contributions by the crown. More than healers, the Relievers focus on the environment of their patients and clients, teaching methods to prevent disease and injury, to protect the family and the home and to make a better life through devotion to Garlen and the aspects of the Passion.

Relievers are exempt from military levy, but voluntarily attend the troops in time of war. Many of the order saw service during the Invae Wars, and continue to do so in conflicts with Horrors and Invae since the Scourge. They advised the builders of kaers on the best ways to strengthen the shelters against Horror invasion, and helped protect the homes of Shosara's Name-givers during the Time of Hiding.

Emblem: A black cauldron over a fire.

Regalia: The emblem is displayed on

virtually every item carried by members, embroidered on their clothing, sewn in applique on their bags and pouches, inlaid in their jewelry and painted or engraved on their tools. Some members go so far as to have the emblem tattooed on their persons, usually on the right cheek just below the eye. Officers of the order do not differentiate their emblems.

Order of the Winged Dagger

With membership by invitation only, the Winged Dagger serves as the Queen's personal men-at-arms. Throughout the nation, the Winged Daggers act as bailiffs, sheriffs, and general law enforcement officers. They see to it that the will of the crown is carried out, and that dangers to the nation do not grow or remain. Rumor has it the order also handles intelligence operations.

Very little about the order is a matter of public record. They do not use a Rite of Progress, relying on internal recommendations or the advisement of the crown for promotion. Their membership is composed primarily of adepts, although not entirely, and includes followers of non-fighting Disciplines as well as those on the paths of the warrior, swordmaster and archer. At least one follower of the Insect Hunter Discipline has left the Jade Mask for the Winged Dagger, being the only departure from that order that can be made without censure. One thing is certain: the Winged Daggers pledge their lives to the Queen, and would gladly die rather than betray her wishes.

Emblem: A dagger with silver blade and ebony hilt, point down, with silver wings trimmed in deep blue sprouting from just above the quillons.

Regalia: The emblem is usually worn as an inlaid metal badge or brooch, and frequently kept hidden until needed for identification. Whether or not officers of the order add identifying sigils is unknown.

Followers of the Upper Path

A philosophical Order, the Followers of the Upper Path retire from society to spend their lives in contemplation of the deeper mysteries of the Shosaran way. Upon joining, new members spend four years in apprenticeship, learning the mental exercises and previous work of the order. At the end of the apprentice period, members are tested in a private ritual. If they pass, they take blood oaths to the order, and enter seclusion in the Order's retreat high in the Douasey Mountains in the far north, to pursue their studies uninterrupted. Oathbound members may leave order facilities only with permission of the elders of the order, and only for specified purposes. Leaving the Order entirely is only possible by undoing the blood ritual, which requires a reNaming ceremony and all its attendant hazards and detriments. The rigorous discipline is felt necessary to keep the mind on the upper path, the route to enlightenment. Philosophical insights agreed upon as valid by the elders are written down and sent to the Library at the Collegium of Shosara, where they serve as reference works for other Orders that deal with interpretations and refinements of the Shosaran way.

Emblem: A four-pointed white star, with four smaller rays set on the diagonal, edged in dark blue.

Regalia: Members of the order wear grey hooded robes clasped at the throat with a brooch inlaid with the emblem. Those who have taken their vows have the emblem tattooed on their left cheek, just below the eye. Elders of the order do not vary their regalia, as they feel that would create divisiveness and interrupt the harmony between members vital to the contemplative life.

Relations with Throal

Throal is regarded as a potential ally against Thera, considering the stand they took against the empire after the Scourge. At

the time of the war between Throal and Thera, Shosara was unfortunately in no position to contribute resources or troops, being occupied with the renewed invae menace. Now that the invae have been contained, Shosara has sent delegations to the dwarves of Throal. Seeing as both nations are of like mind regarding personal freedom and the threat that the Theran Empire represents to it, an alliance on at least a military level is certain to be signed in the near future.

For all of its high-minded pretensions regarding equality of all Name-Givers, Throal is still a hereditary monarchy. Shosara has a throne, but that throne must answer to the people. Our government is an oligarchy with openings for upward mobility. Any Shosaran citizen who can pass the Rite of Progress may ascend to the Order of the Fallen Rose, or even to the company of the Bearers, and it is the Order that holds final power in our realm.

-- Gosirinn D'tevlestiye, Warden of the Keys, Order of the Fallen Rose

Embassy to Blood Wood

Factions within Shosara have sent emissaries to Alachia to discuss a renewing of diplomatic and perhaps cultural ties. The Dusibi have never given up hope of a reconciliation. Some of the Reunificationists have gone so far as to go to the Blood Wood to take the Ritual of the Thorns, becoming mistishsa se'samriel, followers of necessary discomfort. While many regard their actions as questionable, fanaticism demands a certain measure of respect. However, Blood Elves are not allowed in Hansa-controlled cities, and must live in separate enclaves. Friction has arisen within both major movements, as sects take positions for or against the Blood Elves.

Shosara would have sworn fealty to Alachia had she revoked the Declaration of Separation. Aren't we glad that she didn't - we would have had to Separate ourselves in order to insure our own survival. But her high and mightiness couldn't admit to a mistake, even by a predecessor. She couldn't say that the Rose

Throne was fallible, too caught up in her own perceived perfection. Bitter? Perhaps. But it is difficult to not be bitter when the soul is torn from your people and cast into a pit of corruption by one of your own. This breach within the hearts of the Elven people may not be curable. Even if the Blood Wood can be redeemed, how can we ever look up to a throne that has made such grave errors? Whose holders cannot admit to the possibility of error, and must blunder onward pretending that nothing is wrong? They are bleeding, and yet they ignore the wounds.

-- Ajai Vikzurei, Advocate of the Hansa, Companions of the Swan

Private Involvement

This is discussed more extensively under the heading of *Groups, Sects and Cults*. Suffice it here to say that there are many private organizations and individuals working at purposes not actively supported or approved by the government. As long as these purposes do not run counter to the laws of the nation or the clearly expressed wishes of the crown, nor embroil the nation in untenable situations, these Name-givers are allowed to continue in their pursuits. To deny them expression of their passions would be against the Shosaran way.

Groups, Sects, Cults

Numerous organizations, informal and secret exist within Shosara -- living legend cults, political factions, social cliques. Some of these groups exert sufficient influence that no consideration of Shosaran society would be complete without analysis of what is known of them. Some of what follows is unsubstantiated, some is conjecture. The secrecy of many of these informal factions does not lend itself to study. What is known as fact is indicated as such.

Seekers of the Heart

Shosara does not sponsor the Seekers of the Heart, but some of its citizens do support them. Both major factions have reasons to do

so, the Hansa to reawaken compassion in the hearts of the Wood elves, and the Dusibi to restore the court to its uncorrupted state, a task many feel must be accomplished before reconciliation can occur. Most involvement with the Seekers of the Heart is through private channels. Funds and information are quietly routed to where they will accomplish the most good for the goals of the providing faction.

Contact with the Seekers is a very recent thing, and is not known to the entire cult. It is quite possible that the hierarchy of the Seekers may have suppressed the knowledge of Shosaran contact in order to spur their members on to greater efforts in other pursuits. They may also be keeping the knowledge quiet to keep the Blood Warders from learning of the connection. Certainly, the Blood Warders would not be pleased to learn that Shosara and the Seekers were in league with one another, even in an unofficial capacity. While the crown supports the dominant Hansa philosophy, the Queen has made her wishes quite clear. Shosara will not take any overt or traceable covert action against Blood Wood. There is to be no contact between any member of the Shosaran government and official representatives of the Wood beyond a minimal ambassadorial presence.

The Crimson Embrace

Composed primarily of mistishsa se'samriel that have gone over to the Blood Elf way of thinking, the Embrace seeks to subject all of elvendom to the Ritual of the Thorns. Not all se'samriel elves belong to the Embrace, and not all members of the Embrace have taken the thorns. Non-elves who have taken the thorns are probably members of this sect, although not necessarily so. Currently, the Ritual of the Thorns has to be voluntary. Rumor says that the Embrace is working on a way to apply the Ritual to involuntary subjects and in groups. The Embrace uses a complex system of passwords and emblems to identify themselves to each other, which has not been

recorded.

Guarantors of Safe Passage

With agents rumored to be in place within Blood Wood itself, as well as scattered throughout the lands to the south, Safe Passage promises its namesake to any elf who wishes to move to Shosara. Guarantors teach the Shosaran way of life to anyone interested, taking care that they do not deal with Wood agents. Occasionally, they may refuse teaching to someone whose identity and motives they cannot ascertain to their satisfaction. Candidates for migration are checked carefully for commitment to the change, and for ulterior motives. Safe Passage is rumored to also move Shosarans into Barsaive and into the Blood Wood for various reasons. The insignia and passwords used by Safe Passage members change on an irregular schedule known only to members.

The Brethren

Very little is known for fact about this secretive group. Even the name applied to them is one given by scholars for reference use, and not the Name they themselves use. What is known for certain is that the Brethren are in alliance with the invae.

Their agents move into new territories and prepare them for the coming of invae spirits, locating potential hosts and food for the planned spawn. Frequently, the Brethren masquerade as Questors or members of contemplative Orders, desirous of setting up a shrine or retreat for their organization. Once the building is done, secret rituals are enacted to summon invae into the available hosts.

The existence of the Brethren has made Shosarans wary of groups arriving to establish themselves in new areas. Mistakes have been made, both before and after the Scourge, and innocent Name-givers have been slaughtered as suspected Brethren. Conversely, sometimes trust has been misplaced, and entire villages taken over by

the invae. As clever as the Brethren are, Shosarans must take extreme care, lest they be deceived into allowing an infestation, or have the blood of innocents on their hands.

I have seen one instance where the Brethren sent a delegation to a village, representing themselves as members of an order dedicated to Astendar. Following hot on their heels came another group, masquerading as Knights of the Crimson Spire. They slaughtered the first group after revealing them as invae scouts. The false Knights were then welcomed into the village. We arrived just in time to unmask the deception. Clever or not, they could not fool the true Knights.

-- Yudris Giretec, Swordmaster, Knights of the Crimson Spire

Heart's Blood

Questors of Rashomon who pass themselves off as Questors of Astendar, wandering from village to village, or hiding in the crowds in the cities, they build emotion-endowed gifts with twisted purposes: love potions that work too well,

resulting in death (nobody else can have you) or suicide (if I can't have you...); confidence boosters that build either overweening arrogance (I'm the only person qualified for this) or rampant paranoia (everyone else is incompetent); and similar items. The Order of Grace is actively hunting these people. Their task is made difficult by the appearance and methods of their quarry. The Blood dress and act like genuine Questors of Astendar, some even carrying the emblem of the Order of Grace. They keep up their artistic and performance skills, suffering no penalties to their creative urges from being Questors of a Mad Passion the way someone would who was Horror-marked. Unlike most Questors of Rashomon, the Blood never engage in violence themselves, preferring to spread disruptive influences and let someone else perform the overt acts. These quiet sociopaths may well be the greatest threat Shosaran society has ever faced.



THE SHOSARAN WAY

This volume explores the ways and symbols of daily life for those following the Shosaran way. Filled with customs with a rich traditional history, every act has meaning, every aspect has been considered in the fullness of time across the generations. To be Shosaran is to be part of an ongoing, developing history, to be firmly rooted in the past while looking forward to the future.

The Races of Shosara

While Shosara is an elven nation, elves are not the only Name-givers residing within its territories. Members of most of the other Name-giver races have taken up the Shosaran way and must be numbered among the citizenry.

Elves

The founding race of the nation, elves remain the majority. Most governmental and order offices are filled by elves, and the elven way remains the standard for culture and

aesthetics. Shosaran elves are perhaps more outgoing and more open-minded than their relatives to the south, possibly because of their experiences during the Scourge.

Shosara's elves are by no means the cool aesthetes that the world seems to expect of elvendom. On the contrary, the elves of Shosara are energetic, passionate, full of wonder at the miracle that is life and determined to enjoy it to its fullest. This does not mean that Shosaran elves throw

themselves into situations in the manner of orks, but they do tend to be much less reserved in their expression of emotion and in their enthusiasm for living. Elven arts are vibrant and complex, reflecting the energy and the interwoven patterns of elven life in the northern lands.

At the same time, elves feel a great responsibility toward their nation. It was an elven decision that created Shosara, and elven thoughts that shaped it from its beginnings. No elf shirks this responsibility; to do so is to deny the Shosaran way. While great joy can be found in the routines of daily living, elves do not allow themselves to be so caught up in their enjoyment that they forget their obligations. Standing as parents to their nation, the elves of Shosara must guide and guard the citizenry through the tribulations of existence.

Dwarves

Dwarves are not nearly as common in the northlands as they are further south, forming less than a fifth of the population. Initially, dwarven colonists were few, their ties to the lands of their birth being stronger than their wanderlust. Coupled with a low rate of birth, this kept the dwarves from becoming as much of a power in Shosara as elsewhere.

This is not to say that dwarves have not risen to positions of power. Far from it; many professional orders count themselves fortunate to number dwarves among their master craftsfolk. Carrying themselves with dignity, and having a deep respect for tradition, dwarves have also done well in social orders and in Shosaran society. Many counselors in the Shosaran court have been dwarven. In the military arena, dwarves have served with honor as foot soldiers, provisioners and tacticians.

As Shosaran citizens, dwarves apply their love of family and tradition to the Shosaran way. From long ago, dwarves have learned the ways of their people from their grandparents, passing down their customs from generation to generation. Switching to

the elven customs of Shosara required very little change in the manner, only changes in the forms. Some of the dwarven emphasis on family has conversely made its way into the Shosaran way, bringing a greater bond between generations and a stronger link to the past.

Humans

Ever adaptable, humans have taken up the Shosaran way with ease. While few have achieved legendary status, many have accomplished themselves well. Humans may be found in most levels of Shosaran society, from the farming communities to the craft orders to the military, and even in the court.

The initial migration of humans into Shosara came from Visgothia, and were originally mistaken for outcast trolls shorn of their horns. Later arrivals were shorter and slimmer, lighter of skin and hair, coming from the cold lands of Jotun to the north and west of Shosara. The two strains intermarried after a time, so that now there are humans with the build of the Visgothians and coloring of the Jotuns, and the other way around. Further arrivals from the far west have complicated the situation, introducing red hair and a trim, athletic build.

Today, humans are widely varied in appearance, manners and professions. Their artistic endeavors blend the best of many styles into a pleasing whole. Excelling in theater and other performing arts that require the playing of a role, human presentations are generally well attended. Able to see multiple points of view at one time, humans do well in politics, rising within political orders with ease. Human merchants on land complement the t'skrang river merchants, ensuring the steady and dependable flow of goods throughout the nation.

Obsidimen

Rare and mysterious, obsidimen do not generally consider themselves as Shosaran citizens, nor ask for such status. They tend to

keep to their own ways. Most Shosarans never even see an obsidiman, other than those at court who represent the interests of their Liferocks. The crown has maintained a policy of noninterference with regards to obsidimen, as they cannot move their Liferocks and cannot help that they live on land within the national borders. Very rarely does an obsidiman take up the Shosaran way, and then only to gather information to take back to his Liferock.

Orks

The inherent impulsiveness of orks is both their greatest strength and most fatal weakness. As followers of the Passions, orks are devout, urging themselves on to greater deeds of devotion than most other Name-givers would ever dream of accomplishing. This very zealotry, however, can result in offense against others caught up in the flow of events. In the arts, their works are dynamic and powerful, yet rough, sometimes straying beyond the boundaries of acceptable form. Orks are constantly testing the limits of the Shosaran way, and thus perform a useful function in society by requiring those boundaries to be constantly redefined.

Many orks find service in the military or in the fighting orders, their natural aggressiveness being channeled into useful arenas. Skilled craftsfolk are also found among orks, in the trades of farrier, blacksmith, wagonwright, cooper and others. Ork adepts tend to take up the more active Disciplines, such as warrior, cavalryman and swordmaster, where their strength and stamina serve them well.

While not frequent visitors at court, Shosaran orks are not shunned at social occasions. Their boundless energy is regarded as invigorating, and the occasional social error is the price paid for having them as part of society.

Trolls

When the original elven settlers arrived in

what would become Shosara, they made contact with clans of trolls living in the nearby mountains. These were hard-working people who maintained small farms and grazed large herds, much different from the crystal raiders. While they understood the basic concepts of trollish honor, they weren't nearly so touchy about it, nor were they as warlike and aggressive as their cousins to the south. The trolls agreed to allow the elves to settle in the region, with the understanding that the trolls were not interested in the lowlands and would not interfere with the elves so long as no elf attempted to settle in the mountains. This quiet, informal agreement stayed in place for hundreds of years, as both peoples increased in numbers, and the settlements grew into cities. Eventually, trolls began migrating down the slopes, and elves upwards, and the border was erased as quietly as it had been erected.

Since that time, well before the Founding, trolls have been an integral part of Shosaran life. While few in number, fewer certainly than orks, humans or dwarves, but not as rare as obsidimen, trolls have had a mighty impact on the course of Shosaran history. Without the tireless assistance of the highland troll clans, the kaers and citadels might never have been completed in time. If troll warriors had not stood shoulder to shoulder with the other Name-givers against the invae, Shosara might have fallen to the threat.

During the Scourge, many trolls, outnumbered heavily by other races in the kaers, gave up their own customs and adopted the Shosaran way. Some brought bits of their own traditions with them, incorporating them into their newly-adopted customs. After the Scourge, these trolls did not return to the highlands to take up farming and herding again, but instead settled in the valleys alongside other Name-givers from the kaers, helping to rebuild land in common. The Order of the Horned Skull, which had been founded before the Scourge to look after troll interests, became more active as trolls worked and lived next door to

Name-givers.

While many trolls still live in the mountains in the old trollish way, farming and herding, a substantial number find service with the Shosaran military and with the fighting and crafting orders. As of the time of this writing, the current membership of the Companions of the Brand includes five trolls, and the Pursewarden of the Order is herself a troll. The Order of the Jade Mask is also fortunate to be able to count several of these hardy, determined folk among their numbers.

Trollish artistic pursuits tend to be straightforward, representational rather than interpretive, and on a scale commensurate with their own size. The Grand Fountain in the south courtyard of the Palace was designed and constructed by troll artisans, and while it spawned a heated debate over the merits of sheer size, no person who has seen it can deny that it is awe-inspiring. Indeed, the Queen has been known to meet in its presence with dignitaries from foreign lands whom she wishes to impress with Shosara's might.

T'skrang

Ever the explorers, the t'skrang were the first Name-givers to survey the site that became the settlement and eventually the city of Shosirriyey, the capitol of Shosara. The maps used to plan the colonization were purchased from t'skrang, and guides of that race were hired to assist the colonists in reaching their destination. While they did not number among the colonists, t'skrang merchants were quick to see the potential and to develop trade with the colony.

Over the centuries, t'skrang have established settlements of their own within Shosara's borders. Crew covenants opened trading offices, built docks and dockside facilities, and aropagoi settled in the rivers. Their population grew, and they became an important part of Shosaran society. When the Scourge came, the t'skrang took care of

themselves without joining the other Name-givers in the kaers, and so did not as a result come to take up the Shosaran way.

Today, few t'skrang are counted among the citizenry. Most prefer to hold to their racial traditions and customs. Those rare individuals who take up the Shosaran way tend to be ostracized by their families, cast out for abandoning their ancestral ways. These individuals require a lot of support and reinforcement to help them handle the results of their decision. Fortunately, they tend to be adepts, and so easily find a place within the orders or the military, substituting Shosaran organizations for their lost family structure. Even so, they suffer from pangs of loss, episodes of sadness and occasional wild behavior as they try to deal with the course of their lives.

Windlings

Windlings have been with Shosara since its early days, finding the elaborate spires of the northern elven cities every bit as hospitable as the trees of the forest, and perhaps safer, as birds of prey who make their home in the cities tend to be well-fed on the inevitable vermin. While nearly as rare within the nation's borders as obsidimen, citizens come into contact with more windlings on a daily basis due to their presence in the cities rather than in the countryside.

During the Scourge, windlings shared kaers with other Name-givers, many taking up Shosaran customs. Their gregarious nature drew them into the social circles of the majority inhabitants of the kaers, and from there the windling desire to be in the middle of anything going on led them to discard their own ways for the elven. Some windling traditions were woven into the Shosaran way, while others, primarily those dealing with the physical differences between windlings and elves, were kept as unique customs necessary to the lives of windlings as a people.

Windlings today are still a rarity, but have integrated well into Shosaran society. They hold office, serve in the military and perform as artists and artisans. In general, they stay to the larger cities, where they feel safer amid the crowds. Because of their scarcity, they tend to be found predominantly in small groups within a single order or a few related orders, staying together professionally as well as socially. Their contribution to society and culture is not as great as more numerous peoples, but is appreciated nonetheless.

Dragons

Mention must be made of the dragons. As much as it may pain Shosarans to even consider the existence of such foul, bad-tempered and capricious beasts, their presence and the effects of same must be considered.

In a way, we owe our current existence to the actions of the dragon Alamaise. Had he not so cruelly slain Dallia, the Last Queen, our nation would not have come into existence as an independent holding. Yet we cannot forgive the dragon for an act of murder just because it had desirable consequences. The end does not justify the means.

Shosarans have had a peculiar relationship with dragons ever since the Founding. The murder of the Last Queen forever tainted dealings with the beasts, but their strength, their accumulated knowledge and the feeling of awe when a dragon passes

Daily Life

A day in the life of a Shosaran citizen follows much the same pattern as in any other place. Mornings are spent working at a trade or craft, the nooning is for luncheon and social interaction with fellow tradesfolk, the afternoon for work again and the evening for family and neighborhood social functions. The methods by which some of the basic tasks are accomplished vary a bit from other

overhead are powerful inducements to treat with them. This war between hatred and desire is fought in the mind of every Shosaran who must deal with a dragon.

When Thera offered the Rites of Protection and Passage, one mention was made in council chambers of a similar offer from the great dragons. Queen Feleana I coldly stared down the offending counselor, and no further mention was ever made of the possibility of obtaining protection from the dragons. The counselor resigned her office the following day and retired to the mountains to spend the rest of her life in contemplation.

Only one great dragon is known to make its home within the borders of Shosara. Lairing high atop Mount Sorrow in the eastern Ticmi range, Tiel'naG'ar makes few appearances that demand Shosaran notice, and for this is left alone. Two other great dragons lairing within the nation's lands were slain shortly after the Founding by Adepts seeking their legend, and desirous of cleansing the land of any relation of Alamaise.

The dragon is left alone because it is a cranky, bad-tempered beast with a nasty habit of eating half of any party of would-be heroes who climb its mountain, and chasing the other half back down the mountain with dragonfire.

-- Asrivian Tambiae, Master Guide, Order of the Sextant



nations, and the aesthetics of work are given more weight.

Spirits and elementals perform some of the less pleasant tasks, where there are magicians to conjure them. Honest labor, however, is never considered demeaning, no matter how unpleasant the task. Anything that must be done to insure survival cannot

be in any way wrong. Hard work is frequently made light by singing working songs. Many trades have their own traditional tunes, taught to each apprentice. The sound of a smithy in operation, with each smith carrying their part along with the rhythmic clink of hammers and the whoosh of the bellows, can be every bit as satisfying to the soul as a concert staged by troubadours.

Food production is assisted by Questors of Jaspre to provide enough in the few months of the growing season, but by and large is done by those who feel a deeper connection with the land. There are Farming adepts, who can sense the weather, find fertile soil, know instinctively what to plant and when, cure animal diseases, and so forth. Regional Orders allow these adepts to trade information on their craft, as well as training for others wishing to follow their path. Many of Shosara's non-Adept farmers rely on the adepts for advice and assistance with their fields and animals, resulting in more efficient methods.

The short summer brings a frantic activity to the land. Everyone races about, trying to get a half year's worth of outdoor work done in half that time. For some, the pressure of time brings depression and short tempers, exacerbated by too much drink in the evenings. Toward the end of the season, the

Shosarans and the Paths

The Paths were generally abandoned as interfering with survival in the harsh northlands. Some Dusibi still follow the Paths, as the equivalent of Dae'mistishsa. Very few sa'mistishsa make their homes in Shosara, and those who practice the Strict Path do so quietly, so as not to attract ridicule from the radical Hansa. While the course of a Name-giver's life is supposed to

guards have many troubles to handle, and are always grateful when harvesting begins, for then the people are too exhausted from the hard work to act out their frustrations. Winter gives plenty of time for emotions to settle before the next round.

Gathering places for social events include taverns, wineshops, and tea rooms, as well as larger venues. Known as music halls by long standing custom, these high-ceilinged structures are just as likely to host a dramatic presentation by a troupe of players as a performance by a troubadour. Most halls will have a host to act as a master of ceremonies, a party organizer, a debate referee and an art-show presenter, putting together the right people in the right combination with the right food and drink and the right environment to create the most aesthetically pleasing experience possible.

Shosarans also hold private gatherings in their homes. Some of these are just for social purposes, while others are for celebration of festivals and remembrance days. It is not unusual to find Name-givers of several races attending these private functions, as members of an Order tend to regard themselves as family to each other.



be their own business and not that of anyone else, the Paths are a bone of contention between the Hansa and the Dusibi, and thus provide a basis for some of the more uncouth to violate the social restrictions regarding commenting on another's life choices.



Festivals and Remembrance Days

The largest and most wide-spread celebration is that of Opening Day, when the shield was taken down from the capitol city. On the seventeenth day of the fifth month, commerce comes to a halt throughout Shosara, and all government offices except for the military and those needed for the survival of the nation are closed. The morning is spent in quiet remembrance of all those who died in the Scourge. In the afternoon, citizens leave their homes to plant trees and flowers, in memory of the effort of rebuilding the land. Raucous parties are held in the evening and well into the night, as the survivors celebrate the fact that they are alive, that they and their ancestors survived the Scourge to continue the Shosaran way. In the capitol, at nooning the Queen makes a processional from the Palace to the Shrine of the Remembered in the Court of Heroes, to lay a wreath at each of the columns erected to those who died in the first post-Scourge explorations. That night, a grand ball is held in the Emerald Hall. Invitations to the Opening Night ball are perhaps the most sought-after social status token in the nation.

Victory Day marks when the first invae queen was slain. Celebrated on the twenty-second day of the third month, the festivities resemble those of Opening Day, although with less fervor. The Queen lays a wreath at the monument to the dead of the Invae Wars. Many households engage in a ceremonial insect hunt, mostly relegated to the children, who gleefully slaughter every small bug that can be found while pretending to be the great heroes of the Wars. In the northern mountains, the hunt is more earnest, with armed bands of adults scouring the countryside for invae. Rarely do they find one, the invae being intelligent enough to make themselves scarce when the hunt is predictable. This has yet to dampen the enthusiasm of the would-be hunters, who come back to their villages and towns with grand stories of the expedition. In some

villages, a mock battle is staged, with half a dozen Name-givers operating a costume of a queen invae, and a noteworthy youth of the village donning a green mask to slay the insect. The revelry is more informal than on Opening Day, and lasts well into the next morning.

Settlement Day celebrates the founding of Shosirriyey. A more somber holiday, citizens spend time in private meditation reflecting on the Shosaran way and their place within it. Children are assembled for puppet shows and plays with strong moral messages, teaching important parts of Shosaran philosophy. Held in higher regard in the capitol than in the outer reaches of the nation, Settlement Day is marked on the sixteenth day of the tenth month.

By far the most solemn of the national days, Founding Day marks when the news of the Declaration of Separation reached Shosara. This is a day of sober remembrance rather than celebration, at least for most. The radical Hansa hold private parties on this day, careful that they do not disturb their more conservative neighbors. The Palace is draped in black, and a memorial service is held for Losira I and her sisters. A silent feast is held at the Palace, with the only words spoken through the entire meal being the invocations of the Passions at beginning and end. Many Dusibi make pilgrimages to the temples of their patron Passions, to renew their oaths to bring about a reconciliation. Throughout the nation, even those members of the military on active guard take a moment for quiet reflection on what Founding Day means, and what it means to them to be Shosaran.

The larger cities also hold regular art and music festivals. In Shosirriyey, the fifth day of every month is given over to the arts. Exhibitions are held in the streets, food and drink are sold on every corner and all

business comes to a halt. The populace turns out to view the paintings and sculpture, listen to the musical performances and see plays presented in the public squares. Every artist will have a hat or a cup to receive coins. The better ones can make enough on this day to see them through for the remainder of the month. The Silver Lyre holds a musicians'

festival in Orinicia from the tenth day through the fourteenth day every three months. During this time, Rites of Progress are held for musicians wishing to enter or advance in the Order.



Rites of Passage

The stages of a Name-Giver's life are marked with many events. Birth, death; the first kiss, the first love; the last battle. Rituals are associated with the common stages. All Name-givers following the Shosaran way share these in common, the rites of passage forming a bond within the community and among all of the citizenry.

Birth

When a woman becomes pregnant, the house is marked with a red banner hung above the front door. This lets everyone in the community know to expect a new life, and to prepare for it accordingly. Gifts are prepared and brought to the household over the term of pregnancy, for the child and for the parents, normally small useful items that the family will not be able to prepare for themselves. Neighbors will discuss the Naming history of the family with the parents, to remind them of the course previously followed.

Delivery is attended by a Reliever if at all possible, or by a midwife if no member of the order is available. In small communities, the midwife may be a Reliever, and may be the only member of the order present. The father is expected to attend to the mother's needs during labor, bringing her water and cool compresses, and speaking kind words to help ease her discomfort. Other children may visit their mother during labor, but must be out of the house when actual delivery begins.

Once the child or children are delivered, the father assists in cleaning and swaddling them, then takes them outside to see the sky. All of the family's neighbors, friends and relatives who can be summoned (a good task to get the other children out of the house)

come to see. The father presents his new children to the sky, and then to the assembled throng, proclaiming them his responsibility and repeating part of his wedding vows, to care for his wife and for any children that may issue from the marriage.

During the days following birth, anyone who has the spare time will drop by to assist the family however they can. For the first week, the new father and mother devote themselves almost entirely to the new baby or babies, taking time from them only to see to the needs of their other children, if any. All housework, cooking and so forth is done by other members of the community. This emphasizes the interdependence of the Shosarans, that they must care for each other. It also strengthens the bond between parents and children, and makes for a healthier newborn. In return for the assistance, the family will later help others with their own newborn children, thus bonding the community even closer.

Naming

In the years before the Scourge, the formal Pronouncement of Naming was held three months after birth. Like so many traditions involving birth and death, the Scourge required a radical shortening of the time involved. Now the Name is pronounced

within a week of the child's birth.

After much deliberation during pregnancy, the parents decide on Names for their newborn and, in a private post-birth ceremony, commit them to a Naming scroll. At the end of the week of bonding, both parents bring the new child or children to a place of assembly, present the child or children to the community and read the scroll. The formula goes back to before the Founding, and proclaims the Name of each child before the Passions, the community and the world. A Naming gift is given to each child in the form of a chewing-stick carved with their Name and painted with honey water. Thus, the child learns the sweetness of a Name and of being a Name-giver.

Maturity

The Rite of Maturity extends over several days. The person attaining maturity spends three days in private contemplation of the change in his or her life. Before the Scourge, this time would have been spent in the wilderness, as both a time of meditation and as a test of survival skills. This is now considered far too dangerous throughout most of the realm. Most communities maintain Houses of Meditation, set apart from the community but well guarded to prevent interruption of the passage or harm to the participants. In some areas where the woods are regularly patrolled and the risk of Horrors is low, the old form of the rite is still enacted.

Following the period of meditation, the person attaining maturity performs a public ritual in which they announce the Name that they have chosen for themselves. Many will honor their parents by retaining their birth Names, but some will take new Names determined by the visions they have had during the meditation period. In the reNaming ceremony, the person proclaims their choice of profession or Discipline. Again, most of the time this has been chosen well before the actual rite, but from time to

time the visions during meditation will lead in unexpected directions.

Progress

In the early days of Shosara's relationship with Thera, scholars visited the Golden Isle to observe Thera's cultural developments. While they were deeply offended by the Thera practice of slavery, they noted one advance that Shosara could do well to copy.

"They have an excellent system of bureaucratic testing that ensures the competence of candidates, but it needs work to eliminate nepotism and make sure that levels of competency are maintained. The system could also be extended to cover social placement as well as bureaucratic." Thus stated Jaresk Wonarov, leader of the delegation, in his report to the crown.

Thus came about the Rite of Progression. The Thera testing system was adapted to Shosara's needs. Competency for the office or rank desired is tested according to the standards promulgated by the office or order involved. Physical components were added, to prove general health and attention to body as well as mind. Demonstrations of creativity became required, initially to prove adherence to Shosara's aesthetic principles, and later to insure freedom from Horror taint. When the Order of the Quill was selected to proctor the Rite for every order and office implementing it, consultation with the Quill proctors was added as a necessary component of the Rite. While Thera tries to pretend there is no nepotism and social influence in their testing system, Shosara admits openly that there is no way to completely exclude influence from the testing. Thus, anyone interested in the progress of a candidate may request an interview with the Holders of the Quill, to either extoll the virtues or reveal the faults of that candidate.

A successful test of the Rite moves the candidate into the office or rank tested for. Social rank is not tested for, but may come with an office or a promotion in office.

The Rite of Progress is held individually each time any Shosaran wishes to attain position within an order or office. At some future date, as the population increases, it may become necessary to hold the Rite in groups. The logistics of this are confounding at the present, though. Unless all of the candidates are attempting to progress in the same field, arranging proper testing for each Name-giver in the group would be quite a headache.

In recent contacts with Name-givers from the far eastern land of Cathay, some interest has been expressed by them in the Shosaran testing method. Apparently the idea of a well-constructed system of testing for competency in office fits well with their orderly mindset. Consultation with the Order of the Quill has been arranged, with a delegation from Cathay due to be sent to study the Shosaran system.

Death

Dying is viewed as a transition rather than an ending; this much remains from the doctrine of the Paths. Living and dying and living again are accepted as part of the Wheel of Life, that everyone travels until they reach sufficient enlightenment to leave the Wheel for the Citadel of the Shining Ones. The dead are referred to as Cirolletish ti'Draesis, travelers on the Wheel, unless they died in such a state of spiritual knowledge that their return is not expected. Very few achieve the title of Ozidanitish ti'Draesis, Those Who Have Left The Wheel. Having such a person in the family brings much honor to the entire lineage.

Preparations for and handling of the event are treated much the same as leaving on a physical journey with no return. When old age, disease or other factors are the cause, and knowledge of death's approach is certain, everyone who knows the dying person visits if at all possible. Goodbyes are said, old times are discussed, and best wishes are given for the next turn around the Wheel. Frequently, the dying person will direct the

disposal of their goods, handing over their possessions before death to make sure their wishes are followed. Adepts will normally at this time make arrangements for items specific to their Discipline to go either to a close relative also following their Discipline, or to a member of their Order who will make proper use of the items.

After death, the body is cremated and the ashes delivered to the closest relative or member of the deceased's Order, unless the deceased had specific wishes for the disposition of their remains. Many families have a shelf in the common room of their home where the ashes are kept. Orders will typically have a shrine in their hall where the remains of past members are honored. One week of mourning is set aside, during which time the immediate family does no labor of any sort. Distant relatives, friends and fellows of the deceased's Order take over the household, doing the cooking and cleaning, answering the door, and leaving the family free to express their grief. Frequently a lyric ballad will be composed during this time, to be recited or sung at the next family gathering in memory of the departed.

In the case of accidental or other sudden death, the closest relative or member of the deceased's Order will take care of arrangements, including disposal of the estate. The mourning period is extended for an extra week for this, and to spend time reviewing the person's life the way it would have been done in person had there been warning. The core pattern item of the deceased, if known and available, is placed in a position of honor in the main room of the house and all remarks are addressed to it as if it were the person. Some families use the deceased's ashes for this purpose. Strongly significant objects will do if a core item is not available. The dead are too busy preparing for their next life; grieving is for the living, and the Shosaran way takes this into account.



Relationships with the Passions

Less reserved than southern elves, Shosaran elves and non-elven Shosarans are more forthcoming in expressing their emotions. On the other hand, Shosarans believe that a Name-giver's faith is a private matter, and not for commentary by any other person. This dichotomy is at the heart and the root of Shosarans' relationships with the Passions. Following their drives more openly leads to there being more Questors than in other lands, while at the same time each individual Questor is more likely to be different from the next in his or her method of following their patron.

In some cases, groups of Name-givers dedicated to a Passion have formed Orders, to discuss their relative methods and collectively pursue their goals. Like any Order, membership is voluntary, although a Name-giver may feel compelled by their Passion to join. These orders do not attempt to set a standard for the following of their patron, but do provide a forum where commonalities of approach may be openly debated. As well, they provide a ready source of guidance for Name-givers who may be questioning whether or not they ought to Quest for a Passion.

Disciplines

Long ago, Shosarans agreed that Discipline, like the Passions, was a private matter, to be decided in the heart of each person and not by society as a whole. As well, the inflexibility of the Paths was simply nonfunctional in the rugged environment of the northern lands. Living conditions required more flexibility and adaptability than the Sa'mistishsa or even Dae'mistishsa philosophies would allow. Following more than one Discipline was conducive to survival, while discarding a Discipline's abilities and the learning of a substantial portion of a lifetime left the individual

The three Mad Passions do not have public Orders dedicated to them. There are rumors that pre-Scourge Orders may still exist, having gone secretive to avoid the authorities. While it is not illegal to Quest for a Mad Passion, the acts required for such a Path frequently are against the law.

The distinction is important, as it reflects a basic concept of Shosaran philosophy. Following a Mad Passion is not against the law, just as following any Passion is not against the law. However, while it is not illegal to Quest for Rashomon, it is illegal to commit random acts of senseless violence.

-- Asatar Kylendrellin, Questor of Mynbruje, Order of the Silver Scales

While Name-givers in other lands use new Names for the Mad Passions, Shosarans do not. Erendis and Rashomon retain their pre-Scourge Names. Applying a new Name to the Passion fixes the Pattern of madness, while continuing to use the pre-Scourge Name adds power to the healthy pattern, possibly helping the Passion to recover.

vulnerable and dependent on others, depriving society of the benefit of their learning. For the good of all Shosarans, the Paths were discarded as counterproductive. Abandonment of the Paths was one of the issues in contention when the Last Queen made her historic decision to journey to Shosara.

Under the Shosaran way, adepts must find their own path within themselves. To be true to the Shosaran way, one must first be true to his own soul. Within a Discipline, adepts frequently discuss their own personal interpretations of the mindset and

philosophies of their path, but there is no judgement as to the rightness of any particular vision. There are as many truths as there are Name-givers to hold them.

Only one Discipline and Order requires strict following of their path, and that is the Jade Mask, the order of Insect Hunters. Given the nature of their work, the absolute dedication they require makes perfect sense,

The Arts and Creativity

Aesthetics are considered every bit as important as practicality. If a craftsman makes an item that's useful, but ugly, no one will want to use it, no matter how clever the design. Attractiveness must be considered in the making of every item, whether it be simple toys for small children or an elaborate home for three generations of a family. Take the time to make it well, goes the saying, for it takes twice as long to fix as to build.

Artistic pursuits are required for every citizen. In the Rite of Progress, not only is aptitude for the office, Discipline or trade tested, but development in the three arenas of body, mind and spirit as well. A person

and forms a strong thread in the core pattern of their Discipline. No other Discipline, however, has ever required that sort of absolute commitment. Shosarans believe it is incorrect to apply rules and philosophies from outside of a Discipline to its followers.



who neglects one sphere may neglect others, and a neglectful person makes a bad choice for any position. Since the Scourge began, of course, the testing of creativity has an ulterior motive, that of examining for Horror taint. However, survival is not the only consideration in tests of creative ability. The Shosaran way demands equal development of the body, the mind and the spirit, and the only real way that spiritual development can be demonstrated to another person is through aesthetic pursuits.



NOTABLE PERSONALITIES

Ajai Vikzurei

Advocate of the Hansa

Companions of the Swan

Ajai is a ferocious debater and outspoken champion of an independent Shosara. She wears her pale gold hair long and loose, and paints her face with the sigil of her Order. While of youthful appearance, which she enhances with brightly colored robes of multiple layers, she was born before the opening of Shosirriyey's citadel and has had many years to hone her skills. Her Order is a political organization dedicated to the maintenance of Shosara separate from the Blood Wood and the Fallen Court, and to

promoting Shosara as a model for elves around the world. Ajai has a lot of contacts among the Hansa and their sympathizers, including the Seekers of the Heart and the Guarantors of Safe Passage.

Asatar Kylendrellin

Questor of Mynbruje

Order of the Silver Scales

A wandering judge, like most of her Order, Asatar travels from town to village to wherever her Passion directs her, comforting the injured, avenging the wronged and dispensing justice. Besides being a Questor, she is also an illusionist of moderate Circle, an advantage that makes up for her small

size when dealing with large criminals. One of the few windlings that count themselves among Shosara's citizens, Asatar has bright green wings and hair and a silver tattoo of her Passion's symbol around her right eye. She prefers bright colors, but wears black when acting in her office as one of the nation's itinerant lawgivers. Her speech is exacting, and sometimes slow, as she chooses her words with great care to say precisely what she means. She does her best to never assume anything. Just because a house is painted white on this side doesn't mean it's white on the other. Those who expect windlings to be flighty had better prepare themselves to have their every action and word picked apart.

Asrivian Tambiae

Master Guide, Order of the Sextant

With chapterhouses in every city and town, and a representative in most large villages, the Order of the Sextant is a vital resource, comprising guides, scouts, scout adepts and cartographers. Since the end of the Scourge, they've been busy exploring and remapping the nation. Asrivian is a crotchety old scout, a dwarf whose arthritic knees won't let him do field work any more, and who is finding retirement disagreeable. Rather than spending his time growing flowers or watching his grandchildren, Asrivian, who has few family members surviving thanks to the invae, passes his days at the chapterhouse in Sinsirrac, regaling anyone who will listen with tales of his adventures and writing his memoirs. While his body is beginning to fail him, though, his mind is still sharp, and anyone who can withstand his peppery tongue could pick up some useful knowledge of the northern mountains where he spent his youth.

Azeat Xellodoi

Swordmaster, City of Dulurny

An outspoken Hansa radical, Xellodoi takes advantage of his reputation as a great hero to keep from being arrested for treason.

His constant criticism of the government, especially the Orders closest to the crown, has left him unable to progress in any Order himself. He makes his home base in Dulurny, but ends up having to spend most of his time out on adventures for his own safety. A blocky, dark-skinned human with jet-black hair cut close to his skull, he could be mistaken for a small ork at a distance. Like many Swordmasters, he prefers loud colors and loose, non-confining clothing, and carries a distinctive longsword with a dragon-head hilt.

Davisiyan Perössya

Scout Adept

Rumored to be from a small village high in the Ticmi Mountains, little is known about the elven adept. His appearance is said to change without notice. More exploits are attributed to him than is possible for one man to ever accomplish. His Circle is a matter of debate; some say he may have created an Eleventh Circle for his Discipline. All that is known for certain is that he appears before the Crown when she has need of his services, and that he leaves little trace of his passing. Davisiyan believes in people finding things out for themselves whenever possible, and will occasionally drop clues to deeper knowledge where clever people will be able to make use of them.

Errin Evkritne

Scribe, Order of the Quill

A dwarf of middle years, Evkritne is with the Office of Review and Challenge. He spends his days compiling surveys and statistics on the effectiveness of Rites of Progress, and proctoring challenges to Rites when those tested feel that they were treated unfairly. Exacting, precise and punctual to a fault, Evkritne is everything a Quill official is rumored to be. He brooks no deviance from the written code, and will obstinately refuse to entertain even the possibility of an exception. Bribing him simply isn't done -- the attempt would be reported immediately. However, someone appealing to his ego,

always the weak point of any career paper-shoveler, could find out all sorts of interesting information as to the results of past Rites and challenges.

Friyu Taidij

Order of the Purple Iris

Collegium of Shosara

An ork that has turned her racial intensity to scholarly pursuits, Friyu holds high rank in the faculty of the Collegium as a scholar of history and moral philosophy. Her political views are colored heavily by her race, being a first-generation Shosaran born of parents who migrated north from Barsaive. In her youth, she was told frequently of the terrible way that orks were treated in the lands to the south, and of how it drove her parents to leave their home in search of a better place to raise the children they planned. Their daughter is of a highly independent turn of mind, and a major proponent of Shosara remaining its own entity, separate from the culture promulgated by the Blood Wood. As a member of the Order of the Purple Iris, she has the position and authority to keep her Hansa views in the spotlight.

Gosirinn D'tevlestiye

Warden of the Keys

Order of the Fallen Rose

As Warden, Gosirinn controls access to the Palace and all of the facilities comprising it. He presides over the opening of all Council meetings, the beginning of every formal function and ball, and the interment of all departed members of the government in the Royal Crypts. The Warden stands as a constant reminder of the balance of power between the Crown and the populace. The office has come to be a public platform for the defense of the Shosaran system of government, with the Warden being the principal advocate of political orthodoxy. Gosirinn takes his position very seriously -- possibly too much so. The stooped, scholarly elf is said to wear his robes of office in the bath, and be unable to order lunch without making it a policy statement. While overly

unctuous, however, and far too stiff and formal for a proper Shosaran elf, very few can complain about his job performance, and those that do can only say that he does it too well for their comfort.

Haxin Tonk

Warrior Adept, Order of the Brand

Order of the Horned Skull

A highland troll by birth, Tonk spent several years in the Shosaran military in his youth. There, he advanced in his Discipline and came to the attention of his Order. After being decorated twice for bravery in confrontations with the Invae, Tonk was invited to join the Brand, an offer which he quickly accepted. Many years of service followed, during which time he rose to officer's rank in both the military and the Brand. Currently, Tonk is semi-retired, living in Mosiqas, a predominantly troll town in the foothills of the Douasey range, near the Valley of Ice, where he owns a brewery and operates a training school for the Brand. Tonk's students spend a good deal of time out on the ice, learning how to survive when the land itself turns against you. He still holds reserve rank in the Shosaran military and keeps up his old contacts. While he's getting on in years, and slowing down a little, he still moves well enough to take down the occasional arrogant or careless student. Tonk prefers the company of his own race, but bears no ill will against other Name-givers as a rule. He owes his prosperity to the predominantly elven government, and is deeply loyal to the Crown.

Kheshtin Korvall

Order of the Horned Skull

A troll of imposing aspect, Kheshtin makes up in height what he may lack in body mass, being lean, almost rail-thin for a troll, but a full head taller than most of his race. He knows well how to intimidate people in a face to face confrontation, both with his height and with the power of the Shosaran legal system. Korvall is one of the Skull's most feared advocates, arguing the part of his

people in civil actions and in High Court. His knowledge of Shosaran law is equal to that of a high judge, and his abilities in persuasive speaking rival those of a Troubadour adept. Korvall maintains a high profile as one of the most outspoken champions of trolls in Shosara. His connections reach well beyond the borders of his nation. Not only highland tribes and lowland city-dwellers, but warriors from as far away as Vasgothia count themselves among his friends. As a troll advocate, he sometimes clashes with the established power structure, especially where matters of cultural education, preservation and assimilation are concerned.

Liyo Yaxeia

Order of the Reclaiming

A Shosaran mistishsa se'samriel elf, Liyo went South and took the Ritual of the Thorns some twenty years ago, returning to Shosara to study the Ritual with his fellow members of the Order of the Reclaiming. He carries his thorns with a noble dignity, and speaks passionately about the need for some to endure pain that all may be later released from it. Unknown to his Order, however, Liyo is secretly a member of the Crimson Embrace, and is working against them. During his stay in the Blood Wood, he was briefly one of Alachia's endless string of lovers. His heart still burns for her, and he would do anything to be reunited with her, up to and including perverting the research of his Order. If the Reclaimers use the ritual they're developing from his work, it would force the thorns on the celebrants rather than removing them from the subject. Liyo has also carried out more than a few assassinations of Blood Wood refugees and Reclaimer researchers who were getting too close, each time managing to fix the blame squarely on someone else, including a nonexistent Blood Warder who has supposedly crossed the border into Shosara without detection. To maintain his cover, Liyo occasionally works with the Guarantors, and is frequently successful in getting his charges safely into Shosara. It's such a pity that they sometimes get tracked down later by that Blood Warder who's on the loose.

Losira VII

Queen of Shosara

Lady of the Fallen Rose

Mistress of the Yellow Sash

Holder of the Brand

An avid horsewoman, Her Majesty is a wiry, tanned woman whose maids despair of ever getting her hair under control. Waist-length, her chestnut locks are usually disarranged from her latest ride. Anyone wanting a private audience with her had better sit a hunter-chaser well and be able to keep up. She speaks her mind forthrightly, perhaps more clearly than a monarch ought to, and has little patience for empty formalities. Her decidedly Hansa leanings have upset more than a few factions within the court, who view her recent overtures to Throal as a slap in the face of the Blood Wood. Making an ally of the dwarven nation that rejected alliance with the Wood, and sent Queen Alachia away, can only bode ill for the eventual reconciliation that the Dusibi desire. Her Majesty has taken more than one person to task over this issue, saying that she is acting in the best interests of the people of Shosara, and that the nation will need an alliance with the strongest power between Shosara and Thera in the coming troubles. What she has foreseen, she does not discuss with anyone outside the Companions of the Sash, and they will not speak of it outside their ranks.

Oseandoa Ikotifar Wefayolin

Bearer of the Fallen Rose

Chronicler, Collegium of Shosara

Age has not slowed this avid scholar down, other than reducing his travels to horseback from on foot. Whenever he can get away from the incessant demands of his office, as master of the library at the Collegium and overseer of the Chronicle of Shosara, he traipses about the land, gathering stories and writing his own personal observations of what Shosara has become. He still wears his hair in the long braids of his youth, and prefers brightly colored robes of a style thirty years out of date. Determinedly cheerful and doggedly optimistic, the only thing that has kept Oseandoa from becoming a Questor of Floranuus is his reluctance to commit himself that entirely to any one thing, up to and

including his primary Passion.

Osganiyar Valentevin

Elementalist, Office of Architecture and Engineering, Collegium of Shosara

An older elf, settled in her ways, Osganiyar wears her dark brown hair in a single braid down to her knees, and embroiders her elementalists' robes with complex scenes of the mountains of northern Shosara, where she was born. As the senior elementalist in her department, she's responsible for the training of new elementalists and architects in magical means of construction, including surveying of sites, building and strengthening foundations, and using elementals for heavy work, such as earthmoving or felling timber. Osganiyar is also frequently called in to consult with the Royal Engineers on public works projects, and with the military to help train combat engineers. She's an old hand at academic and court politics, using her office as leverage to see that promising students are advanced, well-trained graduates are appointed to key positions, and the lazy and untalented are quickly washed out of her department.

Shimgwe Trinocia

Master Lutist, Order of the Silver Lyre

Residing in a modest house on the outskirts of Orinicea, Shimgwe spends most of her time working with her instrument, either composing, teaching or just practicing. Her recitals are rare, but looked forward to with great anticipation. What she herself rarely has words for, she expresses through the strings of her instrument. A sad-eyed human woman of delicate features and long, silver-blond hair, she dresses for the most part in enveloping robes of somber hue, and disdains cosmetics and jewelry. When not bent around a lute, she writes thoughtful critiques of political documents, inserting her sparse commentary where she feels it will do the most good. Quite possibly a secret member of the Reclaimers, her origins are clouded. All that is publicly known is that she arrived in Orinicea in her late teens, in the company of an elf known to be a Guarantor. She quietly refuses to speak of

her early life. That she identifies so strongly with the elves, even referring to the People as "we" in her writings, may be a telling clue.

Valite Renasbey

Scout adept

A battle-hardened veteran of the Insect Wars, Valite is a red-haired human of Jotun stock, built large in every direction. Taciturn, skeptical and practical, she looks for the worth in everything and dismisses anything not immediately useful. Valite grew up in the northern mountains, in a predominantly human settlement heavily influenced by their highland troll neighbors. She joined the Shosaran military at the minimum age for humans, found her way into the Scout Corps and turned out to have adept potential. She's seen service in four major campaigns and dozens of minor skirmishes and clean-up actions. The events of her life have left her with a strong hatred of insects and no tolerance for people who can't see what's going on right in front of them.

Yudris Giretec

Swordmaster, Knights of the Crimson Spire

The only troll among the current membership of the Knights, Yudris is a severe, dour man with an uncanny knack for striking to the heart of the matter, whether in battle or in debate. He keeps his thick black hair cut short, his beard cropped close to his jaw, and dresses in dark grey, except for his blood-red Knight's tabard. His blades are plain and serviceable and his speech direct. Of very high Circle, he has been a Knight for the past fifteen years, having previously been a commander in the Order of the Brand. Yudris is close friends with Balacek Eretson of the Jade Mask, another troll swordmaster, from the same highland tribe. The two have frequently brought their Orders together for action against the invae.

ROLEPLAYING A SHOSARAN

Shosaran elves feel that they must justify their actions. The Separation left a deep-seated doubt as to the rightness of their actions, which has followed them down through the generations. Any doubt expressed must be dealt with immediately. Shosaran elves will present heavy arguments in defense of themselves at the slightest provocation, often winning their doubters over through sheer weight of words. Defenses should be well-reasoned, however, and every loophole carefully closed. Being argumentative is impolite. Being defensive is part of life as a Shosaran.

Shosarans, elf or not, recycle pretty much everything. They appear to be terrible packrats to non-Shosarans, as they absolutely refuse to throw away anything that could someday be useful once more. The idea of tossing food scraps into a waste pit instead of onto a compost pile is alien to them. They find it shocking that there are no remakers in Barsaive, as the art of reprocessing used items is a central aspect of post-Scourge Shosaran culture.

Shosarans have a love of titles. A long string of titles after their name makes them feel that their existence is somehow validated. An adept always puts their Discipline first. The list then

includes any offices the person holds, titles of rank, and order memberships, in an order determined by the social status of each. The Office of the Crown Herald maintains a listing, known as the Order of Precedence, which determines the rank of each and every order, office, and award. This list is consulted frequently by all status-conscious Shosarans. Many citizens will go out of their way to increase the status of their Order, gaining status themselves when the Order moves up on the Order of Precedence.

At least one artistic Skill must be regularly pursued. An artistic skill not directly related to Discipline should be developed in play, to reflect the Shosaran philosophy of body, mind, spirit. As the character advances through Circles, stats should be bought up evenly, not concentrating heavily on any one ability. Any player running a Shosaran character who starts getting out of balance should be reminded of the underlying philosophy in some way -- another Shosaran of their order commenting on their studies, a failure in a Rite of Progress, or a situation that requires effort in a sphere that they have neglected.



A SHOSARAN DISCIPLINE

Insect Hunter

Insect Hunters are specially trained to seek out Invae infestations and dispatch them. They developed as a cross between a Beastmaster and a scout, but sought other sources of training as well.

Insect Hunters may not multidiscipline. The Order of the Jade Mask sets the standards for insect hunters, and insists on total dedication to the Discipline above all else. Becoming a

Questor is permitted, as the relationship between a Shosaran and the Passions is considered a personal issue, and not for other Name-givers to comment upon. The Jade Mask will cast out any member found to be training in another Discipline, and will forbid its members to train that person any further as a hunter.

Important Attributes: DEX, PER, TOU

Racial Restrictions: Shosarans only

Karma Ritual: The hunter goes off alone and spends a half an hour in meditation. In his mind, the hunter must work his way into and through a hive of invae. When he reaches the center, and slays the queen, the ritual is complete.

Artisan Skills: Weaving, carving, inlay

First Circle

Astral Sight*
Karma Ritual
Melee Weapons*
Read/Write Language
Silent Walk
Tracking*

Second Circle

Acrobatic Strike
Durability (7/6)
Evidence Analysis*

Third Circle

Lock Pick
Sprint

Fourth Circle

Missile Weapons
Thread Weaving
Karma for PER

Fifth Circle

Borrow Sense
Swift Kick
Initiative +1 step

Sixth Circle

Disguise
Steely Stare
Spell Def +1

Seventh Circle

Detect Trap
Sense Poison
Recovery Step +1

Eighth Circle

Lizard Leap
Poison Resistance*
Physical Def +1

Ninth Circle

Astral Pocket*
Bestial Toughness
Critical Hit

Mask of the Insect: For 2 points of Strain, the Hunter may take on the appearance of an invae for one hour. This is an illusion, and can be detected. When the Mask is used, the Hunter makes a Willpower test. The result of this becomes the difficulty to see through the

Mask. Any being making a Willpower test greater than the Hunter's result realizes the illusion and sees through it.

Tenth Circle

Orbiting Spy
Spirit Hold
Social Def +1
Karma for Recovery

Eleventh Circle

Develop Animal Sense
Spirit Strike*
Spell Def +1
Physical Def +1

Twelfth Circle

Chameleon
Quickblade
+2 Recovery/day

Thirteenth Circle

Detect Influence*
True Sight
Initiative +1 step
Social Def +1

Fourteenth Circle

Life Check
Vital Strike*
Maximum Karma +25
Physical Def +1

Fifteenth Circle

Gain Surprise
Web Astral

Forge Jade Mask: For ten points of blood magic, the Hunter may carve a mask of jade and imbue it with multiple powers. The mask acts as a Major Pattern Item for the Hunter once created. When wearing the Mask, the hunter may use three different powers at will.

1. Mask of the Insect, as the Ninth Circle Discipline ability, for a cost of 1 strain.

2. Thought Link, as the Talent, using the Hunter's Circle as the Talent step. This ability is restricted to other Insect Hunters only, and costs 4 Strain per use.

3. Strike Fear, usable against invae only. The Insect Hunter rolls his Willpower step plus 10 against the Social defense of the invae, using group rules -- highest defense in the group plus one for each additional member. If successful, the invae's steps are all reduced by the amount of the Hunter's success. The ability costs 3 Strain to use.